



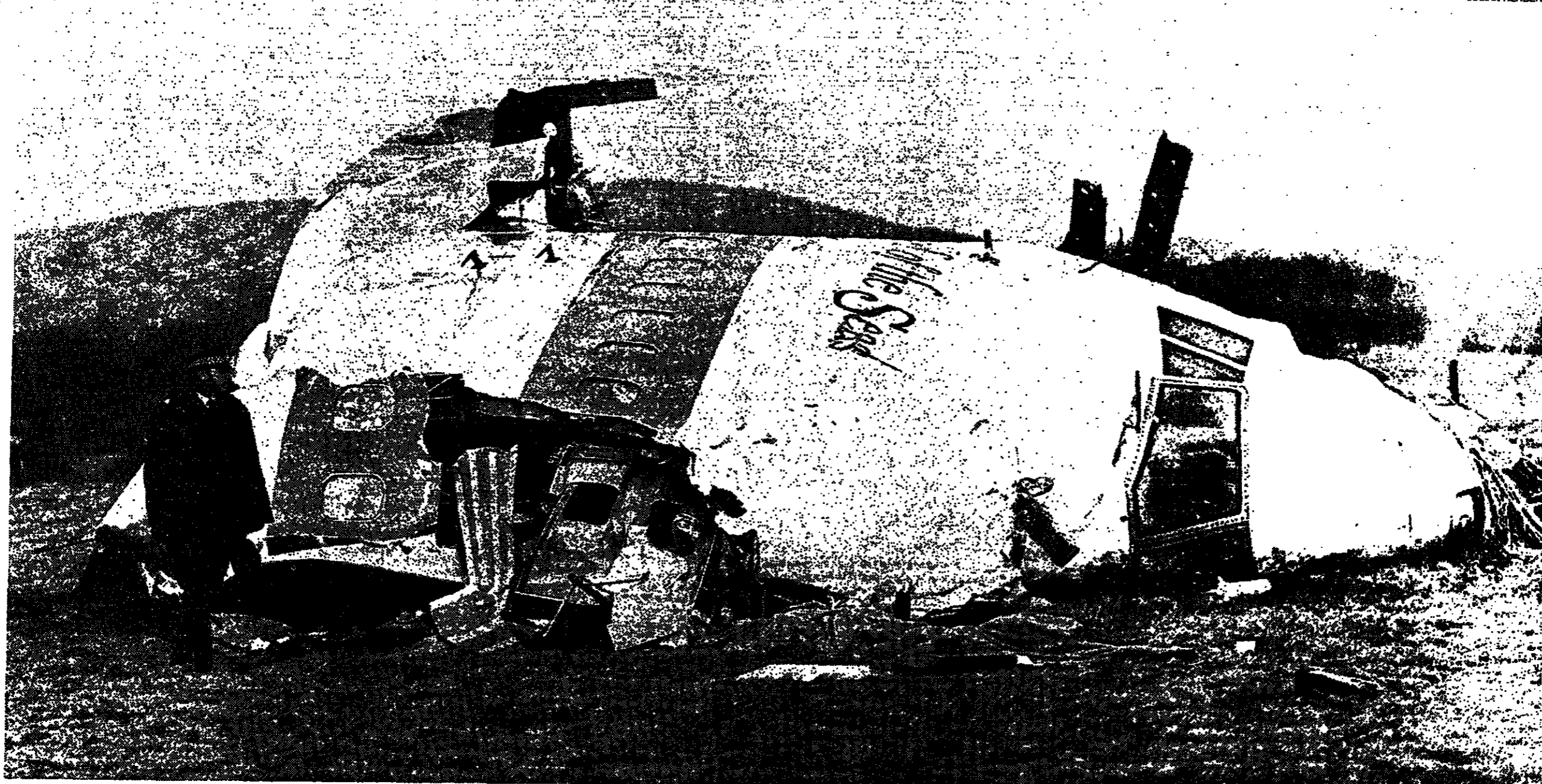
LAST WEEK'S AVERAGE DAILY SALE 435,000

No 63,272

Terrorist sabotage feared as jet crash death toll reaches 275

US was warned of bomb threat

JULIAN HERBERT



The wreckage: Lying in a field outside Lockerbie, the cockpit of Pan Am Clipper Maid of the Seas. The flight deck itself, surprisingly intact, will provide investigators with vital clues.

Embassy bulletin told of terror plan

TO: All Embassy Postboxes
SUBJECT: Threat to Civil Aviation
Post has been notified by the British Foreign Office...

The warning: Section of the letter posted in the US Embassy in Moscow.

By Michael Evans, Stewart Tendler and Robin Oakley

An international dispute was developing last night over two apparently unheeded warnings that a Pan Am plane would be blown up...

One of them clearly specified that a terrorist plot would involve a flight this month to the United States from Frankfurt...

Both warnings were phoned to US embassies, and in Moscow warnings were posted on bulletin boards...

However, last night Heathrow and Frankfurt airport officials denied they were ever told.

Although crash investigators have yet to decide what caused the crash, which is now believed to have killed at least 17 people.

- More photographs 2, 3
Channon statement 2
The disaster victims 3
Parliament 4
Strengthening the 747s 4
Solving the jigsaw 11
Leading article 13
Last moments of Flight 103 20

including four children, on the ground as well as all aboard the Boeing 747, the theory was hardening last night that it was a bomb.

The warnings of a bomb plot were separate and specific and referred to an imminent terrorist attack on a Pan American transatlantic flight.

They were passed to the US Government from Israeli intelligence and a Middle Eastern informant, it emerged yesterday.

One of the warnings suggested that an innocent woman passenger would be used to take a bomb on board.

Yesterday a group calling itself the Guard-

ians of the Islamic Revolution claimed they had brought down the aircraft in revenge for the US Navy attack on an Iranian Airbus over the Gulf in the summer when 290 people were killed.

In Washington, it was revealed that the US ambassador to Lebanon had intended to be on the flight, but had been delayed in Nicosia.

Investigators from the US National Transportation Safety Board working at Lockerbie reported back to the White House yesterday that all three communications radios on Pan Am Flight 103 and the plane's two transponders went dead at exactly the same second. They said this signalled an instantaneous and total loss of power to the cockpit, which was due to an "explosive decompression".

The officials said this decompression could have been caused by structural failure, but it was also what would occur as a result of a bomb explosion.

As terrorist explosives experts from the Ministry of Defence began examining the wreckage, Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist branch started a check of the passenger list. Senior police sources said they were convinced it was a bomb and emphasized that it would only take a small device in the right place to destroy the aircraft, especially if the Semtex plastic explosive was used.

It is believed that, as the Pan Am flight took off from Heathrow 25 minutes late, the bomb was planned to explode over the Atlantic, leaving little or no wreckage from which to pinpoint the cause of the crash.

Last night there was considerable confusion over what steps were taken and who had been directly informed after the warnings of a terrorist attack.

In Washington, Mr Ronald Spiers, an under-secretary of state, said the US Embassy in Helsinki, Finland, had received a telephone threat two-and-a-half weeks ago. A man with a Middle Eastern accent described how a Pan Am airliner flying from Frankfurt



The crater: Aerial view of the 30-foot deep hole gouged by the jumbo through the town.

to the US via Heathrow would be the target of a bomb attack.

The informant who claimed to belong to the financial Palestinian Abu Nidal terrorist organization, said that a woman would take the bomb on board the plane.

Mr Spiers said US embassies, the Federal Aviation Authority and American airlines were notified of the threat.

In a separate warning, Mossad, the Israeli secret intelligence service, also tipped off the US Embassy in Bonn that an attack was likely. Pan Am said in New York that it had received notification from "various sources"

that there was the possibility of a threat against an airline in New York. A spokeswoman said: "We immediately acted and put supplementary security procedures in effect, not only at Frankfurt but at airports around the world."

However, in Frankfurt, Herr Harald Kosec, chief spokesman for Pan Am, said: "I know of no warning about an attack on one of our aircraft, nor do I know if the US embassy alert was passed to our company. I have also checked today with the Frankfurt airport director, who also had no knowledge of any such warning."

Search for groups with hate motive

By Andrew McEwen, Diplomatic Correspondent

One of the problems facing security chiefs in the wake of the Pan Am crash is that many different terror groups could have had motives for wanting to destroy the aircraft.

Although sabotage remained unproven yesterday, security services were already assessing which groups were most likely to be implicated.

The most likely culprit was thought to be the Abu Nidal organization, a radical Palestinian faction which broke away from the PLO. A man

who telephoned the American Embassy in Helsinki on December 5, saying that a bomb would be placed on a Pan Am plane by a woman, claimed he belonged to Abu Nidal.

The security services discounted early suggestions that Mossad, the Israeli intelligence service, might have been involved. These were based on a claim by Mr Yassir Abdel-Rabbo, the leader of the Palestine Liberation

Continued on page 29, col 4

The sale goes on with even more off.

From 27th December our biggest ever sale is even bigger. You'll find reductions of 10%, 20%, 30% and even 50% on selected lines throughout the store as the Habitat Winter Sale is now extended to all departments. THE habitat SALE

Microscopic clues that may yield vital secrets

By Harvey Elliott Air Correspondent

A tiny dent in a fragment of metal could prove conclusively whether the Pan Am jumbo jet which crashed in Scotland was the victim of a terrorist bomb.

Investigators from the Department of Transport's Air Accident Investigation Branch are already examining pieces of the wreckage under microscopes - and measuring

the depth of every indentation. If they discover that the metal has been compressed by a tiny object travelling at the speed of 24,000 ft per second they will begin to give scientific credibility to the strong circumstantial evidence which now indicates that PA 103 was blown apart by a bomb smuggled aboard in luggage stowed in the aircraft's hold. Long years of patient research have proved that, if a bomb is detonated in the cabin of an

aircraft, fragments smash into their surroundings at a speed at least ten times that at which they would do so if the jet broke up in mid-air and the internal pressure escaped.

They will also be looking for minute traces of burns or of the explosive itself in the backs of seats and the bodies of the victims.

The bright orange "black box" flight and voice recorders have been recovered from the crash site and

immediately after Christmas the tapes will be removed from their crash-proof housing and played time and again. A computer will then make a "fingerprint" of the noise inside the cabin. If the "fingerprint" matches that of known bombings then this, too, will help to turn the theory of a bomb into fact. They will also interview every available witness to try to build up a detailed picture of how the aircraft broke up and study

every item of the wreckage to establish a sequence of events.

A bomb seems to be the most likely explanation. The accident is virtually a carbon copy of that which destroyed an Air India jet off Ireland. That aircraft vanished from radar screens at exactly the same height as PA 103. An Indian inquiry said the accident had been caused by a bomb, though no firm evidence could be found to prove that one had been on board.

Continued on Page 20, col 6

INDEX
Home News 5-6
Overseas 7-8
Business 21-26
Sport 28-32
Births, marriages, deaths 15
Court & social 14
Crosswords 18, 20
Daily 17
Features 11, 12, 16, 17
Information 18
Law Report 28
Leading articles 13
Letters 13
Obituary 14
Parliament 4
TV & Radio 19
Weather 20

Sabotage theory mounts among MPs

JAMES GRAY

Bomb aboard or structural defect feared

By Robin Oakley, Political Editor

Mr Paul Channon, Secretary of State for Transport, gave details of the Pan Am Flight 103 disaster to a hushed House of Commons yesterday as the belief grew among politicians that sabotage was the most likely cause of the crash.

Though Mr Channon and Mr John Prescott, the Opposition spokesman, who called the disaster a "nightmare come true", agreed that it would be wrong to speculate so soon on the reasons for the greatest disaster in British aviation history, MPs rapidly made plain their suspicions that a bomb had been planted.

News that the two flight recorders had been found was passed to Mr Channon while he was making his statement. But he had already told MPs that the last contact with the pilot, two minutes before the disaster, was a routine one and that the radar return from the aircraft had split into several pieces at the plane's last known position. Wreckage had been spread over a 10-mile swathe.

Most MPs believed that the clear implication was either that one of the safest aircraft in the world had suffered a sudden and total structural failure or that, far more likely, there had been an explosion on board.

Mr Channon, who has indicated that a preliminary report on the causes of the disaster will be published in two to three weeks, confirmed that there was no indication of any other aircraft in the vicinity at the time.

At the later press conference he said that the plane had "simply disappeared from the radar screen" and acknowledged that it was "virtually certain there would be no survivors".

Mr Channon refused to comment later on reports that American embassies had been warned that a bomb would be planted on a Pan Am flight and that he had been in force in recent days. He described stories of reports emanating from Moscow about a bomb threat to a US plane as "speculation at this stage".

He refused to comment on claims of sabotage by a Middle Eastern terrorist group, but promised that if any steps needed to be taken to stiffen security or safety measures they would be taken rapidly.

Thatcher extends sympathy

By Kerry Gill

Mrs Margaret Thatcher spent several harrowing hours visiting the sites where wreckage of the Boeing 747 now lies. She later emerged from the local police station looking grim faced to say: "It is beyond one's expectations. It is almost beyond one's imagination or comprehension."

Clearly moved by the horrific sights of the crash and bodies constantly being ferried in by helicopters, she added: "You have to see it to realize how bad it is. I would like to say to our American friends that the bodies are being dealt with with the greatest possible dignity, care and sensitivity."

Mrs Thatcher said she had sent a message of sympathy to President Reagan before leaving for Scotland yesterday morning. "It is not only terrible for the people of this town and for Scotland, but for United States citizens as most of the people on board are their people."

Asked if it had been con-

Mr Channon said: "The security record at Heathrow and Gatwick has been extremely good. There is no evidence that it has failed on this occasion".

In the Commons and at a later press conference Mr Channon was closely questioned by MPs on whether passengers would have been able to board the flight at Frankfurt and then leave at Heathrow while their baggage was transferred to the separate plane continuing the flight to New York.

Mr Channon said that it should not be possible for that to happen but refused to be definitive.

Department of Transport officials said that rules specified that "baggage reconciliation" procedures should be adopted if pilots found themselves with fewer passengers for a continuing leg of a flight than they should have; the remaining passengers should have to identify their luggage and any bags found without an owner still travelling should be removed.

In his responses to questions Mr Channon said that his department had been trying to get more telephone lines installed at Heathrow for people seeking to inquire about friends or relatives who may have been on the flight after complaints from MPs that the existing lines had been permanently engaged.

But he defended the authorities' refusal to release the full passenger list in the early hours after the tragedy, saying that it was a difficult balance to achieve. Many alterations were made at the last minute, the flight had not been full and he could understand the reluctance.

When Mr David Steel, Democrat MP, pressed for low-lying RAF exercises in the area of the crash to be suspended over the Christmas period, Mr Channon promised to pass on the request to the Ministry of Defence.

He also promised a speedy response to MPs who pressed for rapid financial and other help to the people of Lockerbie and surrounding areas.

Mr Channon was less sympathetic, however, to a suggestion that international flights should be re-routed over the sea rather than flying for as long as the Pan Am flight had done over land.



A wardrobe stands undisturbed amid the devastation of Lockerbie. The wreckage of these houses spilled on to the A74 and into the gardens of neighbouring homes.

Police begin the checks on passengers

By Stewart Teadler, Crime Reporter

As the possibility of sabotage grew yesterday, Scotland Yard announced that Commander George Churchill-Coleman, head of the anti-terrorist branch, would coordinate London police investigations.

First task for the police is to check the backgrounds of all passengers with American and West German agencies.

In recent years, West Germany has been a prime area for Arab terrorist attacks on American targets, culminating in the bombing of a West Berlin discotheque.

One of the men later held for bomb attacks was a relative of Nezar Hindawi, who tried to blow up an El Al aircraft bound from London two years ago.

The Hindawi device, produced by his Syrian allies,

showed how it is possible to get an explosive past the security screening and on to an aircraft. He planted the bomb in the luggage of his pregnant Irish girl friend, but it was found by a suspicious El Al security man.

The bag passed through the X-ray machine but the Israelis and police found 3lbs of Semtex, a Czech-made military high explosive, taped to the base in a double lining.

The explosive would have been set off by a timer and detonator built into a calculator placed in the bag by Hindawi.

Hindawi's plan would have succeeded but for the high security consciousness of the Israeli airline.

Bombs can be concealed in the hand luggage of unwitting

passengers in a transit lounge or put on board an aircraft among duty free goods.

One important area for police will be to trace passengers who only flew from Frankfurt to London and did not continue the flight. Such passengers might have left luggage behind which was transferred on to the flight to New York. Did the airline page a missing passenger in the period before take-off? Did someone pass through the immigration channels at Heathrow from the flight and then vanish?

Police are also likely to try and check on anyone who joined the flight at Frankfurt or London after arriving from the Middle East or the Mediterranean area. Special Branch and immigration records at

Heathrow will be checked for anyone who might in retrospect raise suspicions.

Police are also likely to explore the state of security checks at Heathrow for embarking passengers, checks on their luggage and the routine for moving luggage from the Frankfurt flight to the New York-bound aircraft.

Yesterday, a spokesman for Heathrow Airport said there were no irregularities or anomalies in airport security for the flight.

Baggage checks were carried out by the airline while passengers and their hand luggage were screened. The spokesman said the airport authorities had received no warnings from Pan Am of any threat.

Heathrow and Frankfurt are rated among the world's most

secure airports, but security experts accept that the weak link in the system is the sheer volume of unsearched luggage checked into aircraft holds. It is almost impossible to search every suitcase and the assumption remains that a passenger travelling in the same aircraft as his luggage is unlikely to blow himself up.

Luggage on Pan Am flight 103 might have been checked in at Frankfurt and put on to the New York flight at Heathrow without being seen by its owner. It is unlikely that it would have been examined at any stage.

At Heathrow yesterday, it was a different story. Travellers faced increased hand-baggage checks, with particular emphasis on transatlantic flights.

Terrorist likely to have died in crash

By Harvey Elliott, Air Correspondent

The terrorist who may have smuggled a bomb on board the Pan Am jumbo must have been, in his terms, incredibly lucky and probably a martyr to his cause.

Passenger luggage is stowed either in the front baggage hold or in the rear cargo hold almost on a random basis.

Had a bag been put inside a metal container and housed in the rear cargo compartment of the jet it is unlikely that it would have so damaged the aircraft that the pilot was unable to give an indication of trouble.

The rear cargo compartment of the jet which crashed was strengthened in September last year as part of a modification to make the 747 capable of being used by the military in time of war.

A giant new door was added which could have been used to load freight. The floor was also strengthened to take the additional weight and this added further protection to the 135 miles of wiring, cables and hydraulic lines in the fuselage.

If, however, it had been placed in the front cargo compartment it would not have had the same protection and would have been only a few feet from the main electronic bay where the aircraft's essential computers and electronics are housed. An explosion there would have disabled the aircraft immediately.

But to get a suitcase into either hold the terrorist would have had to be on board. Pan Am, like most airlines, now insists that each item of luggage is "reconciled" with a passenger.

Had the terrorist checked in the bomb at Frankfurt it would have been subjected to electronic scrutiny which should have picked it up. But even the most rigorous check can fail and airlines now insist that each item of baggage must respond to a label on the ticket both at the boarding airport and at any transit stop.

Duke of York sees devastated town

The Duke of York saw for himself the devastation in Lockerbie yesterday and said: "What I have seen will leave a lasting impression."

After spending an hour touring the area and meeting townspeople, he said he felt sad for Lockerbie, but even more distressed for the American families who had lost relatives. He had earlier called the disaster "horrifying".

The Duke, wearing naval uniform, said: "I've been particularly impressed by the emergency teams. Dumfries and Galloway has had a tough time in the last 24 hours and the emergency services have been particularly valuable."

He said teams of troops were working through the wreckage and he saw RAF search and rescue teams and helicopters at work.

The Duke said he had spoken to people who saw the ball of flame engulf the town. "They were all extremely stunned".

Although he said he had spoken to some of the investigators, he refused to speculate on the cause of the crash. "A

lot of work is still to be done and I'm not going to speculate; that's a matter for them."

The Duke spoke to some people who live behind the town's police station, where part of the plane's fuselage crashed into a house.

"I was told by one resident how they managed to get an elderly lady out of her kitchen where she was trapped, with her two dogs."

The Duke, a Navy helicopter pilot, said such disasters did not put him off flying. "There is an element of risk in all flying and if you allow yourself to worry you would not do it."

After arriving in Lockerbie by car from Rosyth, where he was on his ship, HMS Edinburgh, the Duke visited the police station and the military co-ordination centre at Lockerbie Academy.

As he left to visit disaster scenes, he spoke to Mr Charles Fryce, the US Ambassador, who said: "He expressed his great feeling of sorrow and sadness over the devastation that had taken place and the loss of life."



Mrs Thatcher is shown the site where part of the jet's fuselage left a 20-ft crater next to the A74 Carlisle to Glasgow road.

firmly that the plane's destruction had been caused by an explosion, she said: "They are looking for evidence, and we must really wait."

She said the disaster had been a traumatic experience and rescuers and investigators were as anxious as anyone to find out what had happened.

"I can only say that it is even worse in daylight than it

appeared on television at night. You can see the full enormity of the damage and the way in which pieces of aircraft and twisted metal were scattered over a wide area. It is just terrible."

Mrs Thatcher said she had gone to the site where the Boeing's cockpit section lies on a grassy knoll barely 100

yards from a church. "As you can imagine it was a grief-stricken experience. I am enormously impressed with the work of the emergency services. They are not short of expert help of any kind."

Mrs Thatcher added that there were 600 people involved in going through fields searching for and retrieving bodies.

Mr John Jameson, chief executive of Dumfries and Galloway council, earlier said rooms had been set up at the local school for those evacuated from their homes.

He said the back-up services had done a particularly good job. "We didn't really appreciate the extent of the disaster until first light."

Different kind of dying puts Lockerbie in year's litany of tragedy

By Brian James

Amid the speeding police and rescue teams, the TV crews and the VIPs, just one vehicle moved slowly up Lockerbie High Street yesterday. A hearse. As it carried a resident to the cemetery, elderly men raised their hats and a PC saluted; until yesterday that was the sort of dying that Lockerbie was used to.

The people of this grey little town, before Wednesday a mere flick of the eyes for people in cars speeding to Glasgow on the A74 but now qualified to stand beside Leninakan in the litany of the year's tragedies, seemed sucked in upon themselves. They scarcely glanced up at the swarming helicopters, and certainly looked no higher to the

contrails in the blue sky. Conversation consisted of a few whispers and many shaking heads. Amid nightmare, normality was something to cling to or, if necessary, create.

Between two houses where gangs were patching torn roofs, a man dug himself an ornamental pond. In those streets less badly affected, pieces of the appalling steel debris that a jumbo had become, was placed in neat piles by the kerb.

As usual when madmen or malicious nature decide to celebrate Christmas by taking the lives of the innocent, it was the fairy lights and the tinsel that brought the tears.

Lockerbie's town hall, over which the wreckage of PA 103 flew in flaming pieces on its way to kill 17 of the town's

residents as well as all of those who had been on board, is a grey street's one concession to frivolity. It boasts turrets like a Swiss castle. And at this time of year it also brandishes the civic Christmas tree and twinkling lights. Until yesterday, when someone went in and turned off the twinkle because the town hall had become a temporary morgue.

Beside its doors parish notices crowd. "Dog minder wanted", "Bike for sale". Yesterday they made room on the board for four lists of those who had survived the fire in the worst-hit streets; handwritten additions had been made: "Family all okay - gone to mother's".

They led one small lady through the crowd. "See there, then, it says so... she's all right." She read the name slowly

and glanced up at the Christmas tree with a little half-gesture "at a time like this", and then the tears flooded. At a time like this.

That's what they were saying to each other, too, in the long lines of little black figures combing the green hills to the west where the plane had begun to fall apart. The searching had been going on since daylight. Even so there were far too many moments when they had to plant another pole with a white flag and send for a blanket to cover a body. Clothing, wrapped presents, items of an airline meal - all were noted, marked down or collected, the gay detritus of people flying across the world to celebrate a time of goodwill.

Knowing the force of the impact, seen

in the evidence of the blackened ruins on the fringes of the town and spasmodically in its centre, Lockerbie watched with grey faces as platoons of Highland infantry carrying entrenching tools filed silently up the high street to begin climbing the hills. No one wanted to give words to what might face them for, as an official had put it, "discovery is finished... recovery has begun".

But at least they were professionals. John Rennie who farms up at the top of the hill of the Tunderparth Road had no training for his worst hour. He had been training for rugby when the bang sent him racing home. He took a flashlight and went into the darkness of his paddock where he found 21 bodies.

"It wrecked me. I felt so helpless.

There was nothing to be done for any of them. But one was just a kid. Just 20. I picked up his ID card for the police. He was so pathetic sprawled up against my fence.

"He was going home to his parents and I suppose..."

The hills to the west where the plane began to break up, the golf course on which it left 60 bodies, these had all remained sealed from dawn, partly because investigators need to work undisturbed, partly because the horror needed to be decently shielded.

Up there is where the people of Lockerbie take their Sunday walks, walks that will never be the same again now that they have had demonstrated to them a very different way of dying.

THE LOCKERBIE JET DISASTER

The final resting place of Flight 103

JULIAN HERBERT



In the shadow of the graveyard at Lockerbie, the flight deck of Pan Am's PA 103 lies almost undamaged, belying the violent and sudden end of its journey to New York nearly two days ago. It may hold the answer to the cause of the airliner's crash — whether it sheared off because of the age of the jumbo jet, because of an explosion, or whether it broke on impact with the ground and hurtled into the field to come to rest beside the gravestones.

Young lovers were among crash victims

An engaged couple, flying to New York on a Christmas shopping spree, were among the 258 people killed on board Pan Am's flight 103 at Lockerbie.

Mr Clayton Flick, aged 25, wanted to make a grand romantic gesture by buying his fiancée, Miss Claire Bacciocchi, her Christmas presents in New York.

Mr Flick, from Brandon, Coventry, and Miss Bacciocchi, aged 19, a hairdresser from Tamworth, Staffordshire, planned to marry in the new year.

He booked the flight at the last moment and travelled with his fiancée to Heathrow on Wednesday. They planned to return from New York on Christmas morning to have dinner with her parents.

Flora Swire, aged 22, another of the victims, bought a standby ticket for the flight from Heathrow to New York. She was due to meet her boyfriend there, who would have driven her to Boston, where she was planning to stay with friends for the Christmas holiday.

Friends and staff at Nottingham University, where she was studying for a PhD in neuro-physiology, described her as "an unusually bright and exceptionally able student".

Mr Rajesh Ramesh, aged 33, of Eastfield Court, Leicester, was planning a new life in the United States with relatives who live in New York.

He had worked as a computer operator for British Shoes for 10 years.

Mr Ben Gamadia, a close friend in Leicester, said yesterday: "He was emigrating, so we went out to have a farewell meal on Tuesday."

Mr Bernie McLaughlin, a computer sales director, caught the doomed flight with only minutes to spare. He left his Bristol office at 3.45pm on Wednesday, giving him about two hours to beat the rush hour, travel 130 miles to Heathrow and check in. Had the 6pm flight not been delayed 25 minutes, he might not have boarded. He was on his way to family in America when the plane crashed.

Mr Bill Cadman, aged 32, a sound engineer, lived and worked in London, where he was well-known in the pop music world. He organized the sound systems for the opening of the Tate Gallery at the Albert Dock and had also worked with the pop group Pink Floyd.

Mr David Trimmer-Smith, aged 50, vice-president of the Oxford University Press in the United States, was flying back to New York after a sales conference in Oxford. He would have spent Christmas

with his wife, whom he married only a month ago.

Dr Mridula Shastri, aged 24, a Rhodes scholar at St John's College, Oxford, was travelling to New York to visit her fiancé.

Mr Julian Benellow, aged 25, was a postgraduate student at King's College, Cambridge, working in the department of experimental psychology. A classics graduate from Yale University, he wanted to spend Christmas in Italy, but changed his mind at the last moment to fly home to New York.

Thirty-seven students from Syracuse University, New York State, were on the Pan Am flight, returning home after a term spent at the university's London base in Kensington.

Syracuse brings 250 students to London each year to pursue the British and European aspects of their courses. Those killed at Lockerbie were all in their early twenties, studying a wide range of arts and science courses. The university was in mourning yesterday.

One of the families hardest hit by the disaster were the Mulroys of New York. Mr John Mulroy, aged 59, director of communications for the Associated Press news agency, was flying home after a business trip with five members of his family, including his son, Sean, and his daughter-in-law, Ingrid.

Mr Frank Ciulla, aged 45, vice-president of the Chase Manhattan Bank in London, was returning home to be with his family at Christmas. A colleague said it was an extremely sad time for the bank. Two employees were lost in the Clapham Junction rail crash last week.

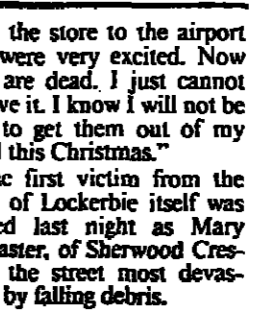
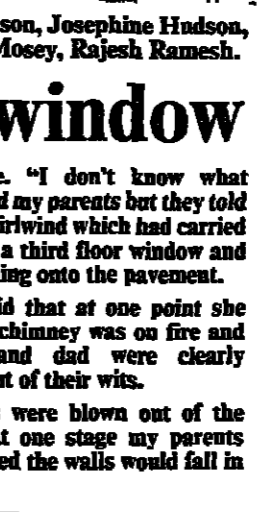
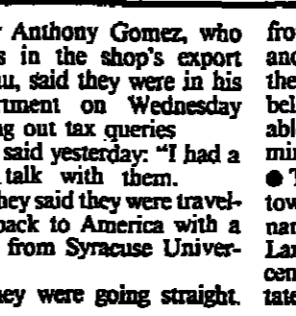
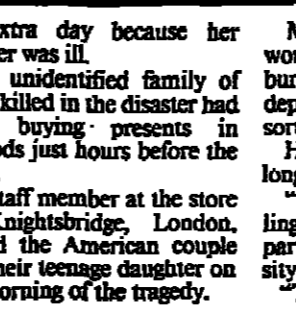
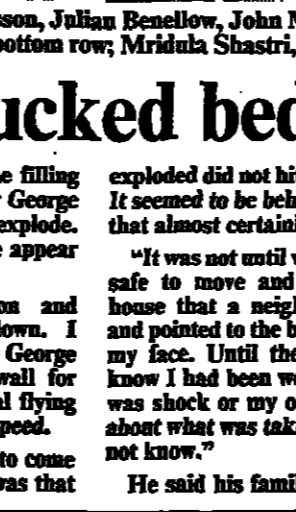
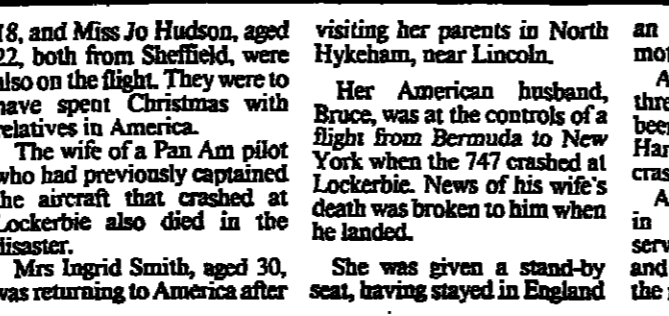
Two senior executives of Volkswagen America were also on board PA 103. Mr James Fuller and Mr Lou Marengo flew from Frankfurt to Heathrow aboard the Pan Am feeder flight after three days of business meetings at Volkswagen's headquarters at Wolfsburg.

Mr Fuller, aged 50, married with two children, was vice-president of Volkswagen's American operation. Mr Marengo, married with three children, was director of marketing.

Miss Melina Hudson, aged 16, the first American pupil at Exeter School, where she spent a term studying English, drama, Spanish and mathematics, was flying home to her parents in New York.

Miss Elizabeth Ivell, a teenager from Robertsbridge, East Sussex, was travelling to spend Christmas with friends in New York. Her mother, Katrina, was due to join her yesterday.

Miss Tracey Corner, aged



Townfolk say it was 'raining flames'

By David Sapsted

One youth thought it was the start of a nuclear holocaust and then dashed through the burning part of the town to find his parents. A passing driver remembered how he had outrun "an umbrella of flame".

And a widow recalled the horror of the burning plane passing over her home...and how, two hours later, she joined other evacuees to play bingo in the town centre.

Such were the memories yesterday of some of the 3,000 inhabitants of Lockerbie of the night PA 103 crashed, killing it is believed 275 people.

"It seemed to rain flame", Mr Bob Carnochan, aged 50, a coach company owner, said. He was driving along the A74 when he heard a "terrible noise...the combination of an explosion and a roar".

"Pieces of concrete started to rain down and bits of metal. The debris came crashing down on my Honda and the windscreen smashed, then a large piece of concrete smashed through the sunroof and landed on the seat next to me. I even found a rivet embedded in the panel."

Mr Robert MacTaggart, aged 17, a writer, said he thought Lockerbie had been hit by a nuclear bomb when the aircraft crashed.

"I was working at the Somerton Hotel when I heard this rumbling sound outside. The curtains started shaking in the room and then suddenly it all lit up outside — like you'd expect a nuclear explosion to be."

"At that stage I thought it might be some sort of bomb but then I saw that the street outside the hotel was full of debris — huge bits of metal with bolts in them."

"I realized it must have been a plane: nothing else could have left stuff like that. I immediately thought about my parents — I knew they'd been shopping in town at the time."

"So I ran through the town looking for them and anyone else I knew to see if they were all right. Everyone else seemed to be doing the same. There were a lot of people rushing about and a lot of confusion."

His story had a happy ending, however, when he was reunited later with his parents at the family home, which suffered only superficial damage.

Mrs Jessie McKay, aged 74, described "an awful whooshing sound, like a gale" as the doomed aircraft passed over her house alongside the A74.

"How it missed our roof I don't know." But two hours later Mrs McKay was playing bingo with others. "It was the only thing we could think of to do. Everyone was so numbed and confused", she said.

'Frightening wind' sucked bed through window

By Ian Smith

A youth aged 17 described yesterday how he was wounded by a silver of aircraft metal as the "fireball" hit Lockerbie.

Ian Hamilton, waiting to be discharged from Dumfries and Galloway Infirmary after being treated for superficial head wounds, also spoke of the "frighteningly powerful wind" which had ripped through his family home in Sherwood Crescent and sucked a bed through a window. He

said: "I was walking near the filling station with my elder brother George when the world seemed to explode. Suddenly I saw a ball of fire appear over the top of the garage."

"There was an explosion and wreckage started falling down. I started to run away while George squeezed tight against the wall for protection. I saw bits of metal flying through the air at incredible speed."

"The hail of metal seemed to come out of nowhere. Whatever it was that

exploded did not hit the filling station. It seemed to be behind the garage and that almost certainly saved our lives."

"It was not until we thought we were safe to move and ran towards our house that a neighbour stopped me and pointed to the blood pouring down my face. Until then I did not even know I had been wounded, whether it was shock or my over-riding concern about what was taking place. I just do not know."

He said his family's home was full

of wreckage. "I don't know what miracle saved my parents but they told me of the whirlwind which had carried a bed out of a third floor window and sent it tumbling onto the pavement."

"Mum said that at one point she thought the chimney was on fire and both she and dad were clearly frightened out of their wits."

"Windows were blown out of the house and at one stage my parents were convinced the walls would fall in on them."

18, and Miss Jo Hudson, aged 22, both from Sheffield, were also on the flight. They were to have spent Christmas with relatives in America.

The wife of a Pan Am pilot who had previously captained the aircraft that crashed at Lockerbie also died in the disaster.

Mrs Ingrid Smith, aged 30, was returning to America after

visiting her parents in North Hykeham, near Lincoln.

Her American husband, Bruce, was at the controls of a flight from Bermuda to New York when the 747 crashed at Lockerbie. News of his wife's death was broken to him when he landed.

She was given a stand-by seat, having stayed in England

an extra day because her mother was ill.

An unidentified family of three killed in the disaster had been buying presents in Harrods just hours before the crash.

A staff member at the store in Knightsbridge, London, served the American couple and their teenage daughter on the morning of the tragedy.

Mr Anthony Gomez, who works in the shop's export bureau, said they were in his department on Wednesday sorting out tax queries.

He said yesterday: "I had a long talk with them. They said they were travelling back to America with a party from Syracuse University. They were going straight

from the store to the airport and were very excited. Now they are dead. I just cannot believe it. I know I will not be able to get them out of my mind this Christmas."

The first victim from the town of Lockerbie itself was named last night as Mary Lancaster, of Sherwood Crescent, the street most devastated by falling debris.

December 22 1988

PARLIAMENT

Channon pledges early report on Lockerbie crash

The inquiry into the Pan Am disaster at Lockerbie would be conducted with urgency and an initial bulletin on the facts would be published soon, Mr Paul Channon, Secretary of State for Transport, told a sombre House of Commons.

A full report would be published as soon as possible.

A team from his department's Air Accident Investigation Branch had arrived at Lockerbie just after midnight and had already begun its work, he said in a statement on the tragedy.

During questions, Mr Channon said that both of the aircraft's flight recorders had been recovered.

MPs united in sympathy for the victims and their families and praise for the rescue and emergency services.

They also agreed that it would be premature and wrong to speculate on the causes, but several expressed concern over the possibility that a bomb might have been placed on the jumbo.

There were appeals for speedy and generous compensation for the stricken community of Lockerbie. Mr Channon said that the Government would contribute to the fund that had been set up locally. He would like to see the problem of compensation resolved as speedily as possible.

In his statement at 11am, Mr Channon said that when the aircraft was 20 miles north-west of Carleton and two minutes after the last radio contact, the air traffic controller at Prestwick had seen the disappearance from his screen of the secondary surveillance radar returns, which identifies the aircraft.

The primary radar return from the aircraft then split into several returns around the last known position. He had been assured by the Civil Aviation Authority that the Scottish Air Traffic Control Centre had no indication of any other aircraft in the vicinity at the time.

Wreckage of the aircraft had come down in a swath of 10 miles or more and large parts fell on Lockerbie causing the destruction of houses, a petrol station and cars on the A74 and

much further damage from fire. "It is of course too soon to draw any conclusions about the cause of this terrible disaster."

Representatives of the US Government and the manufacturer were being invited to assist his department's investigation team in accordance with international practice.

The inquiry would be conducted with all the urgency appropriate to an event of this kind. A full report would be published as soon as possible and an initial bulletin setting out the facts revealed in the first stage of the investigation would be published shortly.

"The House will wish to join me in an expression of deep grief at this tragedy. "It is already clear that the

MPs' recess

Both Houses of Parliament rose for the Christmas recess. The Commons will return on Tuesday, January 10, and the Lords on Monday, January 16.

The main business in the Commons when MPs return is expected to be:

Jan 10: Social Security Bill, second reading. Motion relating to cold weather payments for the elderly.

Jan 11: Employment Bill, second reading.

Jan 12: Debate on the Chancellor's autumn statement.

Jan 13: Debate on Aids.

loss of life is greater than in any air accident that has previously taken place in the United Kingdom and as yet we have little indication of the extent of the losses among the people of the Lockerbie area.

"May I also express on behalf of the Government our deepest sympathy with the American people and our great admiration of the emergency services, which served us so well last night.

Search-and-rescue and support helicopters, aircraft and mountain-rescue teams had been involved as well as ground-support medical and search teams from service units all over the country.

Mr John Prescott, chief Opposition spokesman on transport: Last night at Lockerbie, we saw a nightmare come

true and all of us feel a deep sense of shock.

He said that their thoughts were with the people there and those in this country, the US and other countries who had lost their loved ones.

Yet again, the House and country paid tribute to the professionalism, dedication and heroism of the emergency services and to the courage of ordinary people who attempted to join in the rescue.

"In the few remaining days of 1988 and only nine days after the Clapham rail disaster, this horrific aviation tragedy makes December 1988 one of our worst months for deaths in the passenger transport industry."

Mr Channon had the full support of the Opposition in ensuring, in the course of investigation, that any lessons learnt were acted upon straight away.

Mr David Steel (Tweedale, Enrick and Lauderdale, Dumfries) said that this area was used for the low-flying exercises and, although there was no connection between such flights and the crash, people's feelings would inevitably be heightened by it. Could the Ministry of Defence suspend such flights over the Christmas and New Year holidays?

Mr Channon said that he would draw the request to the attention of Mr George Younger, Secretary of State for Defence.

Mr Brian Wilson (Cunninghame North, Lab) said that Lockerbie would endure a prolonged aftermath of human suffering, psychological trauma and physical damage. Could the Government give an assurance that it would meet these needs and pay attention to the sensitivities of the people?

He paid personal tribute to the local MP, Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries, C), whose anguish last night was that of a man who is truly part of the community he represents.

Mr Nicholas Soames (Crawley, C) asked for confirmation that security at Heathrow and Gatwick was high.

Mr Channon said that security at the two airports was among the best in the world. If more needed to be done, it would be done.



A grim Mr Malcolm Rifkind, Secretary of State for Scotland, at the crash scene yesterday

Christmas adjournment debate

Economic League attacked

The Economic League, which supplies information on potential recruits to employers, was a pernicious, insidious, modern McCarthyite body, Mr Greville James (Leicester West, Lab) said during a Christmas adjournment debate.

It haunted the shadows of industrial relations and caused damage to the reputations of innocent people.

Replying to a request by Mr James for an investigation of the league, Mr John Lee, Under Secretary of State for Employment, said: I will consider what he says about an independent inquiry and convey the conclusions of those deliberations to him in due course.

Mr James had said that the provision of information on potential employees should not be left to secret, shadowy

organizations, which hoarded information that could not be examined by an independent body.

The league was known to be the key organization in the provision of such information, but an important former official had described its central register as "chaotic and more fiction and than fact".

Did the reputable organizations which made use of the league know that? If they were made aware, would they waste their shareholders' money in seeking information?

Mr Lee said that it was for employers to decide how to recruit employees and they should have complete freedom to do so. Too many restrictions would be a burden on businesses.

He denied suggestions that

the Employment Service might have made use of the Economic League or any similar body.

The league had set itself up as a provider of information and there was nothing unlawful about that, nor was there in employers choosing to use such information to reach recruitment decisions.

"That does not mean that there are not restrictions on the activities of such companies.

"Those who provide such information bear a heavy responsibility to ensure that the information they supply is accurate and those who use it should satisfy themselves as to the quality and accuracy of the information by asking a second opinion from a reliable source."

New legislation was neither necessary nor desirable.

Political sketch

Sad contrast in a distracted House

The House met, Sir Philip Goodhart reminded us, under a shadow. He meant the air crash at Lockerbie, on which a statement from the Transport Secretary was promised for 11am. First, though, on this last parliamentary morning before Christmas, Sir Philip had called a debate on the plight of Vietnamese refugees.

Why did that seem a trivial distraction from Lockerbie? By the end of his speech, Sir Philip made one ashamed to have left so.

He stared unhappily around him at an almost entirely empty chamber. Even the journalists looked inattentive.

Sir Philip did not minimize the horror of Lockerbie. Gently, though, he pointed out that perhaps 300 have been killed there, while more than 30,000 had been killed, or drowned, trying to flee Vietnam.

Sad, he reflected, that the slow tragedies never attract the interest of sudden ones.

It was strictly according to custom that Mr Speaker left, here, for a deputy to take over. But it was an unlucky coincidence.

Sir Philip described conditions in camps in Hong Kong for those who escaped alive.

His halting manner seemed unmatchable to the force of his argument. Nobody in Government, he said, was individually evil. Officials in Hong Kong tried to be kind. He knew the Foreign Secretary (Sir Geoffrey Howe) to be a man without cruelty. The junior minister, Tim Eggar, was a generous minister.

Yet the foreign policy for which these men were collectively responsible, was wicked. One of the two backbenchers who had wandered in, wandered out.

Britain accepted 20 refugees a month, Sir Philip concluded. Though hardly the solution, could we not take a handful more?

And would the minister promise we would not forcibly repatriate refugees to who knows what murderous reception from the country they had fled? Would the minister renege a policy of detention and repatriation of people who have already suffered so much?

The Principal Doorkeeper, all in black and tailcoated like a slender beetle, buzzed in mut-

ted conversation at the Bar of the House with the bestocking Assistant Sergeant at Arms. Perhaps it was about the plight of the refugees.

Roger Sims spoke in support. Then came Mr Eggar's reply. It was polished, dignified (like a Foreign Office draft) to explain that everything is more difficult than it seems.

Besides, in this "difficult and sensitive issue", "screening" was "in accordance with established international criteria". Economic refugees are "screened out": 10 per cent who are genuine refugees are "screened in" and a few extra useful ones can come here.

The screened-out 90 per cent are now "temporarily" in Hong Kong till arrangements can be made for their "future". They were very much "a residual problem".

The thought occurred that, if he meant repatriation, the fate of this residual problem would be to be screened out in the Vietnamese sense. But there was no need to worry. "Assurances" had been given and would be "monitored".

So, no, he could not pledge that there would be no compulsion, or — in his words — "We're certainly not talking about compulsion at this stage".

Sometimes — as in this debate — the House brings so little time or attention to matters of great suffering.

At others, as in Paul Channon's statement on Lockerbie, the House brings time, words, and grave attention to matters where there is everything to be felt, but very little to be said.

The unhappy ritual was sensitively handled by Mr Channon, John Prescott (for Labour) and David Steel, in a packed chamber.

But, as an undoubtedly sincere voice intoned: "Our thoughts at this time are also with..." one's own thoughts had left the mock-gothic carving, green leather and muted microphones.

What could it matter to those hundreds of people in Scotland; and to those tens of thousands of refugees, murdered, drowned or "screened-out" as the Foreign Office might put it; and to those still alive? Sorry: "the residual problem".

Matthew Parris

Crash plane had 21 mechanical problems

From Charles Bremner New York

The Pan American 747 involved in Wednesday's crash had suffered a series of troubles due to its age, but any structural flaws would have been repaired when the plane underwent modifications to enter the reserve military transport, the Boeing company said yesterday.

Reports filed with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) showed that the plane, a 1970 Boeing 747-100, only the fifteenth jumbo made by Boeing, had experienced at least 21 mechanical difficulties since 1980.

In November last year a 16in crack near the upper part of the fuselage bulkhead was discovered. It was blamed on corrosion, which was also noted in the plane's floor beam and other areas.

According to FAA records, a leading edge flap, a flap that extends from the wings in slow stages of flight, fell off the plane during take-off from Karachi, Pakistan.

However, Mr Jack Gamble, a spokesman for Boeing in Seattle, said the problems mentioned in the reports would have been "investigated" when the plane was modified for military use in the Civil Reserve Air Fleet.

Airlines agree under the programme to make craft available for transporting cargo or troops in emergency. It involves partly dismantling aircraft, strengthening their decks for military freight and fitting a large cargo door. The airline earmarked 19 747s for modification and is to receive \$600 million dollars compen-

eration from the Pan Am 747 may have exposed the people of Lockerbie to the risk of heavy metal poisoning (Robert Matthews writes).

Boeing, the aircraft's makers, confirmed last night that early 747s had depleted uranium built into their tailplanes as counterbalances. The one which crashed was only the fifteenth built.

So-called depleted uranium, by-product of nuclear reprocessing, has been built into about three-quarters of all jumbo jets in quantities of up to 1,000 lbs as a counterbalance.

Normally it is safe, but in tiny particles of the sort

generated after a violent explosion, it can be ingested, causing potentially lethal heavy metal poisoning.

In the latest issue of Nature, Dr Robert Parker, a former US Government scientist, warns that up to 250,000 people could be put at risk by the 1,000 lbs of depleted uranium carried in a 747.

He quotes tests by the US Navy and Nasa which show that temperatures in jet aircraft fuel-pool fires are high enough to cause very rapid oxidation of depleted uranium.

"It is the release of airborne and respirable oxide particles from such fires that present a hazard", Dr Parker said.

maintenance on older aircraft than to buy new ones. Another factor that will keep older aircraft in service is two to three-year waiting lists from manufacturers.

Almost a year before Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, the first production-line 747 rolled out of a hangar at Boeing's massive plant near Seattle. That aircraft, built to the same specifications as the one which crashed so tragically at Lockerbie, is still in service with Pan Am.

According to both the airline, whose jumbo fleet has an average age of 17 years, and Boeing, there is no reason why it should not be.

The current fleet of 710 jumbos — plus another 173 on order — operated by 70 airlines worldwide could continue in service indefinitely, Boeing said, as long as airlines were prepared to spend the increasing amounts of time and money to keep them maintained to rigorously en-

forced safety standards.

Nevertheless, there is mounting concern about the effects of ageing, particularly in the United States where the average airliner is more than 12 years old.

An experts' commission recommended to the FAA on Monday that airlines flying the older Boeing 727s and 737s, smaller jets making more frequent flights, should fix or replace 122 potential items that can cause trouble on bodies, wings, undercarriage and tails rather than inspect them indefinitely.

Age can cause a range of defects including hydraulic failure that can disrupt the operation of the control surfaces, but the defect most feared by pilots is a structural rupture that can cause catastrophic decompression and the break-up of the aircraft in flight.

Many points are vulnerable, including the forward and aft pressure bulkheads, and the

land with a huge section of fuselage missing. Only one person, a stewardess, was killed.

The FAA ordered intensive inspections of 737 airframes, replacement of thousands of rivets and crack inspections on a range of older jets. Aloha also retired several very old 737s.

The incident prompted calls for a structural inspection of the elderly US commercial airline fleet by the National Transportation Safety Board.

The problems of metal fatigue, particularly those resulting from the repeated bulging of a fuselage caused by pressurization, were the priority, the board said. The survey was not undertaken.

Privately, executives in the airline industry say that the importance of the Aloha accident has been blown out of proportion by media and political pressure.

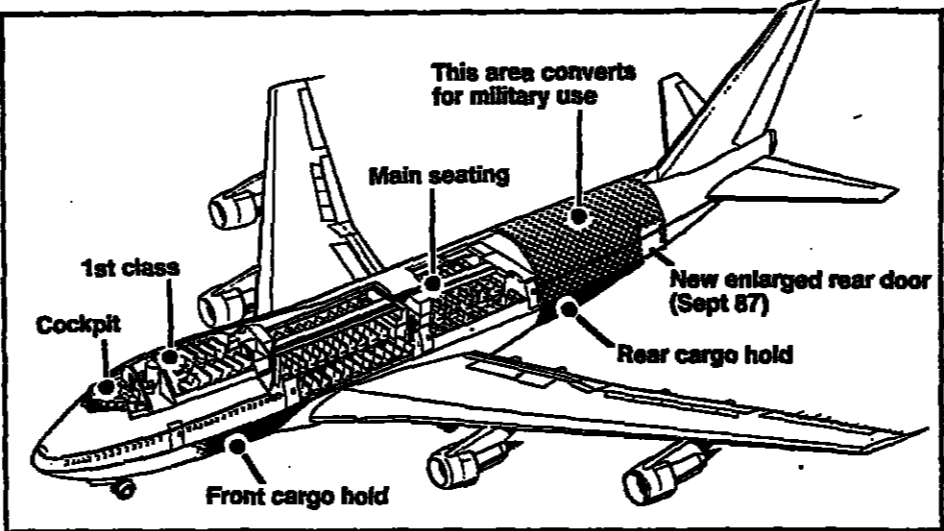
Mr Rodger Pannone, who brought claims over the Manchester air disaster, said: "If the convention limits apply, the levels of compensation will undoubtedly be less than levels recovered in the Piper Alpha oil disaster, for instance."

"But if, and there is no reason to believe this is the case, the airline was guilty of wilful default, levels would be considerably greater."

But he emphasized that relatives and those injured should not at this point be thinking about claims.

"They should be helped to come to terms with their grief, and then, when the time comes, go to their local solicitor."

Mr Frank Lefevre, another solicitor whose company,



forced safety standards.

Nevertheless, there is mounting concern about the effects of ageing, particularly in the United States where the average airliner is more than 12 years old.

An experts' commission recommended to the FAA on Monday that airlines flying the older Boeing 727s and 737s, smaller jets making more frequent flights, should fix or replace 122 potential items that can cause trouble on bodies, wings, undercarriage and tails rather than inspect them indefinitely.

Age can cause a range of defects including hydraulic failure that can disrupt the operation of the control surfaces, but the defect most feared by pilots is a structural rupture that can cause catastrophic decompression and the break-up of the aircraft in flight.

Many points are vulnerable, including the forward and aft pressure bulkheads, and the

land with a huge section of fuselage missing. Only one person, a stewardess, was killed.

The FAA ordered intensive inspections of 737 airframes, replacement of thousands of rivets and crack inspections on a range of older jets. Aloha also retired several very old 737s.

The incident prompted calls for a structural inspection of the elderly US commercial airline fleet by the National Transportation Safety Board.

The problems of metal fatigue, particularly those resulting from the repeated bulging of a fuselage caused by pressurization, were the priority, the board said. The survey was not undertaken.

Privately, executives in the airline industry say that the importance of the Aloha accident has been blown out of proportion by media and political pressure.

Mr Rodger Pannone, who brought claims over the Manchester air disaster, said: "If the convention limits apply, the levels of compensation will undoubtedly be less than levels recovered in the Piper Alpha oil disaster, for instance."

"But if, and there is no reason to believe this is the case, the airline was guilty of wilful default, levels would be considerably greater."

But he emphasized that relatives and those injured should not at this point be thinking about claims.

"They should be helped to come to terms with their grief, and then, when the time comes, go to their local solicitor."

Mr Frank Lefevre, another solicitor whose company,

ment to Boeing aircraft and to Pratt and Whitney which resulted in the Boeing 747 jet.

Employees were told "to forget the glory days" earlier this year by Mr Plaskett, hired from American Airlines.

He spelled out the hard choices faced by the airline. After a decade of high costs, union strife, big losses and increased competition on its profitable transatlantic runs, Pan Am had to pull itself out of the doldrums and find new ways to compete, Mr Plaskett said.

Whatever the result of the crash investigation, the future looks bleak for an airline which in 1948 boasted that it was the first in the world to offer blue-chip first class service.

ment to Boeing aircraft and to Pratt and Whitney which resulted in the Boeing 747 jet.

Employees were told "to forget the glory days" earlier this year by Mr Plaskett, hired from American Airlines.

He spelled out the hard choices faced by the airline. After a decade of high costs, union strife, big losses and increased competition on its profitable transatlantic runs, Pan Am had to pull itself out of the doldrums and find new ways to compete, Mr Plaskett said.

Whatever the result of the crash investigation, the future looks bleak for an airline which in 1948 boasted that it was the first in the world to offer blue-chip first class service.

How the queen of the carriers fought on to stay aloft

From Bailey Morris Washington

This was to have been the year of recovery for Pan American World Airways, once the premier of US airlines which at one time boasted transatlantic and Pacific round-the-world routes, a chain of luxury international hotels and, in 1948, was first to offer first class service.

Since buying the first Boeing 747 off the drawing board in the late 1960s, Pan Am's future has also been inextricably linked with the jumbo jet, which the airline flies under the Clipper name. But the Lockerbie crash may herald the return of sleek removers.

Once-proud Pan Am was strong internationally but weak in America.

Deregulation allowed strong domestic US airlines to challenge it across the Atlantic, feeding into their own networks. Gradually Pan Am has been forced to sell off the company jewels, one by one, since it hit bottom in 1980.

Analysts said yesterday that the airline had finally begun to make progress after a decade of financial strife and was on the way to posting a modest profit in 1989. Although it is expected to show a loss this year of \$90 million, the latest in a string of losses since 1980, Pan Am analysts anticipated a small gain next year.

But the crash of PA 103 in Scotland could end the high hopes of Pan Am's new chairman, Mr Thomas Plaskett. He could be

forced into a sale the airline has fought to avoid since Pan Am was put up on the block in the mid-1980s.

It has succeeded in staying afloat by selling its headquarters building in downtown Manhattan, its Inter-Continental Hotels subsidiary, its famed Pacific runs, and by leasing some aircraft and mortgaging others in its 126-plane fleet, which included 38 Boeing 747s.

Much now depends on what caused the accident, in the opinion of financial analysts. If it resulted from either faulty aged equipment or from a new wave of terrorism, the airline's earnings could be severely affected.

That would be yet another blow to the former queen of US air carriers,

British claims limited unless airline at fault

By Frances Gibb and Vivien Goldsmith

The Pan Am air crash could give rise to one of the most substantial claims for compensation in the history of disaster litigation.

However, unlike the Manchester aircraft accident, claims will be strictly limited to a ceiling of 75,000 dollars each (£42,000) unless relatives of dead passengers or the injured can show Pan Am was guilty of "wilful default".

That might apply if, for instance, the airline failed to take adequate security measures in the face of bomb warnings and could give rise to mounting claims in courts in the United States where awards might run into hundreds of millions of pounds.

If a bomb was the cause, the Government could also find itself — initially at least — footing a huge bill for compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

Unlike the Manchester disaster, claims by relatives of passengers will not be governed by the Warsaw Convention 1929, but by the Montreal Agreement of 1968 which sets a 75,000-dollar ceiling on each claim for death or personal injury.

That agreement, details of which are printed on every airline ticket, applies to all flights to and from the United States.

Mr Rodger Pannone, who brought claims over the Manchester air disaster, said: "If the convention limits apply, the levels of compensation will undoubtedly be less than levels recovered in the Piper Alpha oil disaster, for instance."

"But if, and there is no reason to believe this is the case, the airline was guilty of wilful default, levels would be considerably greater."

But he emphasized that relatives and those injured should not at this point be thinking about claims.

"They should be helped to come to terms with their grief, and then, when the time comes, go to their local solicitor."

Mr Frank Lefevre, another solicitor whose company,

Quantum Claims, handles personal injury cases, agreed if claims were brought in the United States, then awards could be "extremely high".

"You are looking at the levels of earnings of the passengers and factors such as how many children there are. But the amounts would be about three-and-a-half times British levels.

"For a widow with two children who enjoyed a good income, you are probably talking about £1.5 million."

Those on the ground whose homes and cars were damaged by the debris from the aircraft will first have a claim against their own insurance policies. Homes will be covered by building structure and contents' insurance.

The contents' policies usually include a nominal sum for death or major injury such as the loss of a limb up to a maximum of £1,000.

Homeowners without insurance may have a claim against the airline, as there is strict liability for all damage on the airlines.

Motorists with comprehensive policies should have no difficulty in lodging a claim. But those with third party, fire and theft cover would have to show that the vehicle was damaged by fire rather than just flying debris.

Motor policies typically also contain provision for payments for death or serious injury.

Insurance company representatives are already active at the scene of the crash helping people to secure their property.

General Accident has set up a 24-hour emergency telephone line which will remain open over the Christmas break. It is encouraging homeowners to go ahead and make temporary repairs to protect their property.

Those who have been made homeless by the disaster can claim up to 10 per cent of the sum assured under either the buildings or home contents' insurance to cover the cost of finding alternative accommodation.

Inventor devices defused

Police see

Currie was consultant

Cancer link

Britain defies European ruling

By Philip Webster
Chief Political Correspondent

Britain is refusing to comply with a European Court ruling that terrorist suspects must be charged and brought before a court within four days.

Mr Douglas Hurd, the Home Secretary, told MPs that it was derogating, at least for the time being, from the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, to allow police to continue to be able to detain suspects for up to seven days.

Britain's anti-terrorist laws were held to be in breach of the European convention.

The derogation, under which Britain will withdraw only from parts of the conventions that cover detention, will give the Government more time to consider the European Court judgement and to find a way to

introduce a judicial element into the period of holding terrorist suspects for questioning. It has been considering how a judge, magistrate or legal panel could consider police requests for extensions.

But Mr Hurd told the Commons standing committee on the Prevention of Terrorism Bill that further reflection and consultation was necessary. He said the Government wished to find a judicial solution. His remarks gave MPs the clear impression that if the Government cannot find a satisfactory solution the withdrawal will be permanent.

The European Court ruled that the detention of four men for more than four days in 1984 breached the convention.

The Government's decision was denounced by the Labour Party. Mr Barry Sheerman, its home affairs spokesman, said the decision could harm international co-operation to

defeat terrorism. Mr Peter Archer, QC, a former Labour Solicitor General, said that derogations were supposed to be made only when war or other public emergencies threatened "the life of the nation".

Miss Marjorie Mowlam, the Northern Ireland spokeswoman, said the Government seemed intent on dragging Britain's reputation through the mud. "The Government has missed the chance to make progress towards restoring respect for the rule of law in Northern Ireland."

But Mr Hurd said the Government was determined police should continue to have the powers they needed to counter terrorism, and to be able to detain suspects for up to seven days.

Other countries held suspects "for months", but did not fall foul of the convention because of their system of examining magistrates.

"We are also concerned that information about terrorist inten-

tions, which often forms part of the case for an extension of detention, does not find its way back to the terrorists as a consequence of judicial procedures which, at least in the United Kingdom legal tradition, generally require someone accused and his legal advisers to know the information alleged against him."

The Government is unlikely to announce before the new year a decision on whether to request the Irish government to prosecute the terrorist suspect Father Patrick Ryan.

The news was given by Whitehall sources as the Metropolitan Police continued with interviews of about 60 witnesses who would need to be called if there were a trial under the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act. Britain cannot compel the witnesses to attend a court in the Irish Republic and Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Attorney General, considers their personal security is paramount.

Bomb blast soldier is jailed for 10 years

A young soldier was jailed for 10 years yesterday after a boy was scarred for life by his home-made bomb.

James Cobb, aged 19, voted the best recruit of his year by officers from the Second Battalion, Royal Green Jackets, wanted to see a stranger become the victim of his "unbridled curiosity" the Central Criminal Court was told.

He planted the complex device in a busy area near his home, Michael Walsh, aged four, was playing when he picked up the bomb in a bottle, thinking it was a drink.

There was a huge explosion and he was turned into a fireball. Mr John Bevan, for the prosecution, said it was a miracle the boy survived.

Cobb, of Haywards Gardens, Putney, south-west London, was found guilty of using explosives with intent to maim, burn, disfigure or cause serious bodily harm. He admitted possessing other explosives and 180 rounds of ammunition.

He told police: "I was bored and a bit depressed. I just wanted to see it go bang."

Mr Bevan said: "It was done out of morbid curiosity or some other unhealthy motive connected to his fascination with explosives."

Surrey murder suspect in court

An unemployed man aged 20 was remanded in police custody for three days yesterday, accused of murdering Mr Peter Hurburgh, aged 57, a hairdresser whose body was found trussed up in a field after his car was ambushed at Warlingham, Surrey, last Friday.

Raphael George Rowe, of Sydenham, south-east London, appeared before magistrates at Reigate, Surrey, where he was also charged with attempting to murder Mr Tim Napier, aged 41, at his home in Oxley, Surrey, and with two counts of robbery.

Later a second man, aged 22 and also from Sydenham, appeared in Reigate Magistrates' Court facing the same charges. Mr Rowe will appear in court again on Boxing Day.

Crossbow evidence

Jane Salvesson, the London design consultant accused of killing another woman with a crossbow, has "authoritative" new evidence that will prove she is innocent, a court was told yesterday.

Miss Salvesson, aged 35, is charged with murdering Miss Diana Maw on July 20 this year. Yesterday, Mr Brian Raymond, Miss Salvesson's solicitor, told Ealing Magistrates' Court that he had strong evidence to prove his client's innocence.

Bill to control racing

A Bill will be introduced next month setting up a British Racing Commission, covering horse and dog racing, betting and breeding. Mr Alan Meale, Labour MP for Mansfield, quashed all night outside the Commons' Public Bill Office to win the right to introduce the Bill. It is expected to receive its first, formal reading on January 24, but stands virtually no chance of getting through.

Strike call criticized

The National Association of Port Employers yesterday described a strike call by leaders of Britain's 9,500 registered dockworkers as "futile and wrongly directed". The Transport and General Workers' Union is to ballot the dockers on an indefinite national strike in defence of the National Dock Labour Scheme, which effectively guarantees them a job for life. It decided on the ballot after two employers - scrap-metal companies - on Clydeside refused earlier this month to use dockers registered with the scheme.

Hunt for girl's killer

Detectives hunting the killer of Gaynor Barry, aged 14, last night appealed for two men seen talking to her shortly before she disappeared to come forward. The girl was strangled after being sexually assaulted. Her body was found on Wednesday by an attendant at a multi-storey car park. She was attacked as she made her way to her karate lesson in Crowtree leisure centre, Swindon. Her cousin said she saw Gaynor, of Rosemount, South Hylton, talking to the men, aged about 18, about 15 minutes before class.

Incendiary devices defused

Members of the Animal Liberation Front are believed to have planted further incendiary devices in stores.

A man has claimed he was treated like a crank when he tried to raise the alarm about one of them.

The suspect packages were found in the men's clothing department at the Kendal Milne department store in Deansgate, Manchester, and in the stationary department at Lewis's in Ranelagh Street, Liverpool. Both were made safe.

Mr Brian Reid, of Clayton, Manchester, said a 999 operator refused to take him seriously when he told how a crossed telephone line allowed him to eavesdrop on the Manchester conspiracy.

He then tried to ring a city police station but failed to get through. Eventually he raised the alarm by telephoning a newspaper office.

Sound start to charity spot with LSO



Mrs Vivien Fisher, a housewife from Stroud, Gloucestershire, who bid £1,000 in the BBC Children in Need appeal to play with the London Symphony Orchestra, prepares for her moment of glory tonight at the Barbican with Ron Forfar, one of several stars from *Bread*, the comedy series, who are also joining the performance of the Toy Symphony, by Mozart.

IRA explosives cache Police scour London for unit

By Stewart Tendler, Crime Reporter

Scotland Yard detectives are searching London for "safe houses" used by the IRA active service unit uncovered when a terrorist shot a would-be car thief, leading police to a massive bomb factory in Clapham, south London.

As the search continued yesterday, the Yard issued an artist's impression of the gunman. He is described as having a soft Irish accent, is aged about 30-35, and is 6 ft with dark, wavy hair. He walks with a slight stoop and may be wearing a full-length leather coat.

Commander George Churchill-Coleman, head of the Yard's anti-terrorist branch, said police believed the gunman and a second man wanted for questioning were still on the British mainland.

Scotland Yard officers suspect that they and other members of the IRA unit may have used the Clapham flat

purely as a bomb factory and lived somewhere else in London.

The pair are thought to have used a range of false names and the two cars linked to them were bought or hired with false identities.

Police have raided up to 10 London addresses in search of the unit's headquarters. Mr Churchill-Coleman confirmed that their list included one residence in Leyton, north-east London.

Details of the two men in the Clapham flat have been sent to the RUC in Northern Ireland and the Garda in the Republic for possible matching against known IRA operators. Fingerprints are being matched with a huge IRA collection built up by the Yard since the 1970s.

Mr Churchill-Coleman said he could not fully explain what the gunman was doing when a youth of 18 apparently tried the door of the Renault car he was in.

The gunman was in the rear of the car, either sleeping or hiding. He shot the youth and ran to the flat. He and the second wanted man fled in a red Rover car, later abandoned in north London.



Artist's impression of the wanted man.

Currie was misled, consultant says

By John Young, Agriculture Correspondent

Mrs Edwina Currie, who resigned as Under Secretary of State for Health last week, was misled on statistics relating to salmonella contamination in egg production, an independent environmental health consultant said yesterday.

Mr Richard North, a former local authority officer who specializes in cases of food poisoning, said that, given her understanding of the information supplied to her, Mrs Currie would have been wrong not to say what she did in alleging that most egg production in Britain was infected by salmonella.

Mrs Currie has been invited to appear before the Commons Select Committee on Agriculture, which has also asked the Department of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture to supply the briefing papers that were prepared for Mrs Currie.

"I honestly believe that she may have been set up", Mr

5 London hospitals to close

By Jill Sherman

Five London hospitals, the Westminster, St Stephen's, Fulham, Westminster Children's, the West London, and St Mary Abbots are to close by 1992 in a controversial plan to build a £135 million teaching hospital in west London.

The 660-bed Westminster and Chelsea Hospital will be built on the site of St Stephen's and will be paid for by the sale of the four other sites. The sale of St Mary Abbots alone is expected to raise enough money to build the new hospital.

Approving the programme yesterday Mr Kenneth Clarke, Secretary of State for Health, said that the new hospital would greatly improve health services in the capital.

● The health service is losing more than £4 million a year from theft and vandalism, a report by the National Association of Health Authorities says today.

Cancer link with passive smoking

By Pearce Wright, Science Editor

The harmful effect of passive smoking, in which non-smokers inhale the fumes of smokers, has been shown in new research which establishes positively the link between cigarettes and lung cancer.

The findings also suggest that it is increasingly unlikely that a safe tobacco cigarette could ever be developed.

Scientists examined lung tissue of individuals who smoked between five and 40 cigarettes a day and found that the extent of damage to the strands of DNA at the heart of each cell, which control growth, is directly related to the number of cigarettes

smoked. Non-smokers were included in the laboratory analyses by the research groups working with Dr David Phillips, at the Institute of Cancer Research, in London, and Dr Colin Garner, at York University, which used a sensitive new bioassay to identify chemical agents obtained during lung surgery.

Dr Phillips said more than 50 substances that are biologically active, and potentially damaging to DNA, were generated by burning tobacco.

The scientists had detected traces of these compounds in the cells of lung tissue from non-smokers. Unadulterated tobacco contains more than 2,500 identified constituents in addition to habit-forming nicotine alkaloids.

They include a wide range of complicated substances found in many plants and at least 30 metallic compounds.

Although the dangerous residues left in the lungs have been identified after burning, little is known about the biochemistry of many of them in their original state.

Dr Phillips said the question remained why some heavy smokers escaped lung cancer and why about 10 per cent of victims were non-smokers.

SALE

Starts 9am
Tuesday 27th
December.

**FINE SAVINGS ON FURNITURE
CARPETS AND BEDS.**

WITH INTEREST FREE CREDIT*

THE HOGARTH COLLECTION

Stylish design and superb comfort are beautifully combined in this elegant suite. Its frame is crafted from selected quality hardwood, classical sweeping arms and the ivory damask cover give the suite timeless appeal.

Individual prices:

3 Seater Sofa
*NORMAL PRICE £915 SALE PRICE **£825**

2 Seater Sofa
*NORMAL PRICE £779 SALE PRICE **£699**

Chair
*NORMAL PRICE £199 SALE PRICE **£179**

3 PIECE SUITE
*Normal Price £1,799
SALE PRICE **£1,439**

THE KENSINGTON SQUARE DINING FURNITURE RANGE

A superb quality, Georgian style dining group, made in the finest mahogany veneers with hand finished inlays. The china cabinet is enhanced by subtle interior lighting and a mirrored back.

M A P L E S

OF LONDON

145 TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD, LONDON W1. Tel: 01-387 7000

Gas leak confirmed as cause of Piper Alpha rig explosion

By David Young, Energy Correspondent

The final technical report into the Piper Alpha oil rig disaster has confirmed that gas, fed into a partially dismantled valve, was the likely cause of the explosion.

The Department of Energy report, sent to Lord Cullen, who is to open the official public inquiry into the accident in Aberdeen on January 19, has ruled out any other likely cause.

Investigators considered several scenarios, but concluded that the explanation given in an interim report issued in September—that gas was fed into a valve that had been partially dismantled by maintenance workers—indeed caused the initial explosion on the rig late on the night of July 6. More than 160 rig workers were killed in the disaster.

Among the possibilities considered was sabotage, but the report said: "There is no evidence to suggest that the gas release and explosion was the result of an act of sabotage by anyone on the installation or elsewhere, and no allegations have been received to this effect."

Operational error and mechanical damage were also ruled out. "Operational or maintenance errors other than those already considered are [thought] unlikely in the absence of any evidence."

"Accidental mechanical

damage is another possibility for which no evidence has been identified."

Other possibilities investigated and discounted included plugs of frozen gas liquids forming in pipelines and causing pipe ruptures, other pipeline and pressure vessel failures, and the failure of the platform flare-stack system—however, that was seen to be fully operational 75 minutes after the initial explosion.

The report confirms that new automatic shut-off systems in sub-sea oil and gas pipelines will be required to be installed in all existing oil and gas production platforms.

The oil industry estimates that fitting new shut-off systems could cost as much as £2 billion. The report confirms that all the proposals for such systems submitted by the oil companies operating in the North Sea are being studied by departmental engineers and new regulations will be introduced to cover the fitting of such equipment.

Gas from sub-sea pipeline systems flowing back towards the burning Piper Alpha platform was a significant contributor to the fire that followed the initial explosion on the platform.

Mr Peter Morrison, the minister responsible for the offshore oil and gas industry, said yesterday that as any

further investigative work into the accident would be undertaken by the public inquiry, Mr Jim Petrie, the Department of Energy's director of offshore safety, would end his investigations.

However, the department's technical staff would continue to investigate various issues raised by the incident that could lead to more safety rules being introduced in the oil industry.

The department based its disaster investigation on statements taken from survivors, witnesses and technical experts. All its conclusions and evidence will be considered in detail by the public inquiry.

Other evidence that the department will submit to Lord Cullen will be a report on seven inflatable life-rafts recovered from Piper Alpha.

An investigation is being conducted to determine why the rafts were not successfully deployed and used and why those that were launched did not inflate.

There will also be a detailed report comparing the risks faced by personnel accommodated on production systems and those accommodated on hotels linked by bridge or by helicopter.

The public inquiry will also deal with offshore evacuation procedures and emergency systems, an area not covered by yesterday's report.

Cataract scheme puts couple in focus

ADRIAN BROOKS



Mr Richard Money and his wife, Betty, who can see each other clearly after being helped by Operation Cataract.

By Emma Wilkins

Mr Richard Money and his wife, Betty, were having a clear look at each other for the first time for years on the beach at Worthing, West Sussex.

The huge improvement in their eyesight was thanks to Operation Cataract, a scheme funded by the Impact Foundation and Worthing Health Authority to make hundreds of such operations possible by looking after patients at a

hotel before and after surgery. Without the scheme, the Monneys would have had to wait until beds became available.

"It's a wonderful operation", Mrs Money, aged 75, said. "I can see my husband clearly for the first time. He jokes about it and says I did not realize how handsome he was."

The couple married only six years ago, at a time when both had failing eyesight. They had first met in Worthing when she

was still at school and were childhood sweethearts. They separated after three years, but were brought back together when both their spouses died in 1982. "I feel as though I am 25 years old again", Mr Money, aged 77, said.

The Impact Foundation, which deals with preventable or remedial disabilities, launched Operation Cataract last year with Worthing Health Authority. Since then 326 people have had their sight restored.

'Racist' taunt made after man is stabbed

A man was stabbed to death in a London street after being chased by black youths. Afterwards one of the group returned and is alleged to have told witnesses "that's what happens to racists", it was said yesterday.

Detectives hunting the gang said the victim must have been seen by dozens of people as he sprinted along North End Road, Fulham, south-west London, in a desperate attempt to escape.

He was caught outside the Old Oak public house, beaten and then stabbed at about 11.10pm on Wednesday night. The man, white but not yet identified, is believed to have been aged about 29.

An incident room has been set up at Kensington police station. Det Supt Roy Herdridge, leading the hunt, said: "He was seen to be running along North End Road weaving in and out of traffic."

"He was caught outside the Old Oak pub, furiously beaten, punched, had his head banged against the pub wall and was kicked to the ground. He was stabbed, we think one stab wound to the heart."

"Given that it was just after pub closing time, that there would have been a lot of pedestrians around and that North End Road is very busy, there should have been a lot of witnesses to what happened."

Mr Herdridge said: "Witnesses have told us that after the man had been stabbed one of the men returned to the scene about five minutes later.

Call to lift ban on contingency fees

By Frances Gibb, Legal Affairs Correspondent

The lifting of the statutory ban on contingency fees, by which lawyers would do work on a "no win no fee" basis, was called for by a Law Society working party yesterday.

The move would be a first step towards allowing solicitors to take on cases without charging a fee if they lose, as allowed in Scotland; and to recoup their normal fee from any winnings, if successful.

The Government is likely to recommend that such arrangements be allowed in its Green Paper to be published next month.

The move would not necessarily lead to the American-style full-blown contingency arrangements, by which lawyers reap a percentage of any damages awarded.

The proposals have been drawn up to improve access to justice, in particular for those people ineligible for legal aid but who cannot afford litigation costs.

The present statutory ban prevents any kind of contingency deal, whether the US-style contingency arrangement, by which lawyers take a percentage of any damages awarded; or the Scottish "speculative funding", which enables solicitors there to agree to waive any fee if the case is lost. At the same time, the profession's own practice rules bar such arrangements.

In a working paper on improving access to justice, not yet endorsed by the Law Society Council, the working party comes down clearly in favour of "speculative funding".

Despite the statutory ban on formal arrangements, the practice is widespread and many solicitors take on per-

sonal injury cases, divorce, tribunal cases and even libel claims on the basis that if they lose, they will not claim a fee.

The report says Scottish arrangements should be brought into effect in England and Wales. It recommends that if the statutory ban was lifted, the Law Society should change its own practice rules accordingly.

On the American-style contingency fees, the working party draws no conclusion, although it does highlight what it sees as a number of disadvantages of such arrangements.

Mr Michael Churchhouse, chairman of the working party, said that contingency fees would only be relevant in a small proportion of cases; that is, those where damages were awarded.

The damages also had to be sufficiently large for solicitors' fees to come out of them at the end of the day, he said; and in England and Wales, unlike in the US, damages awards tended to be lower.

Another problem was that because of the courts' rule on costs, the loser in a case pays the legal costs of both sides, which does not happen in the US. So the person entering into a contingency fee arrangement was still at risk of losing money, he said.

The working party rejected a mutual insurance "fixed costs" scheme, whereby clients would pay a fixed sum into a fund. The fund would pay costs if the case was lost, but if won, the client would not recover his premium.

Improving Access to Civil Justice - Some Further Proposals (113 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1PL).

Weekend food prices

Set the party going with a whole salmon

Fresh fish will be off most shopping lists now, but for pre-Christmas parties a whole salmon could be the answer if time is short. A small Scottish salmon at 2-4lbs costs about £2.80 a lb, 4-6lbs £2.80 to £3.60 and 8-10lbs £3.40 to £3.80 a lb. Norwegian salmon is even cheaper. Smoked salmon costs from £10.50 a lb and smoked trout from £8.

If you are looking for those meaty tiger prawns or cigales, Covent Garden fishmongers in west London might be your only source of supply. Fresh scallops are a good buy at 60p to £1.20 each or out of shell £1.90 a lb.

The supermarket price for turkeys seems to have settled at 98p a lb; fresh geese is more difficult to find but Safeway has it at £2.25 a lb and Sainsbury at £1.98 a lb. Frozen geese is £1.75-£1.80.

Ham is the perfect partner for hot or cold poultry. Sausage meat is £1 a lb at Sainsbury.

Most prime cuts are up in price but topside is on special offer at Asda for £2.17 a lb, Sainsbury for £2.18, and Tesco £2.19.

After rich Christmas food what could be nicer than a simple lunch of sausage and mash; Safeway has low-fat chipolatas at £1.18 a lb and

Waitrose has Lincolnshire sausages at £1.20 a lb. Marks & Spencer has a great selection of traditional recipe sausages. Bejam has excellent cocktail sausages. Lamb kidneys, at about 30p each, add a nice Victorian touch to breakfast.

There is a superb array of fruit and vegetables for Christmas. Home-grown produce is plentiful, good quality and prices are stable. Cranberries are the pick of the week fruit. They cost 80p to £1 a half pound, which will make three-quarters of a pint of sauce. Citrus fruit is fantastic, particularly little clementines at 25-50p a lb, Satsumas 35-50p a lb and oranges are 8-25p each. Lovely red apples from Canada and America are 45-60p a lb, English Cox's 35-65p a lb and Bramley cookers 35-45p.

New crop Californian walnuts 80p to £1.20p a lb are superb quality. Chinese walnuts are 70p to £1 a lb. Filberts 70p-£1 a lb are in good supply due to a particularly good Italian crop. Brazils 75p-£1 a lb are scarce this year. Chestnuts are 90p to £1.25 a lb. Salads are slightly more expensive with round lettuce 30-40p a head, iceberg 60p-£1 each, coccumbers 60p each, tomatoes 40-55p a lb, and celery is 50-70p a head.

H. SAMUEL

Centenary Sale

UP TO 25% OFF WATCHES

30-DAY CHANGE OF MIND GUARANTEE

PRICE BREAKTHROUGH SOLID GOLD WATCH ONLY NORMALLY £149.50 **£129.95**

LADIES' GOLD-PLATED WATCHES FROM BRITAIN'S BEST RANGE

- EVERITE QUARTZ £29.95
- ACCURIST QUARTZ £29.75
- ACCURIST QUARTZ £57.90
- SEMO £59.95

HIGH-FASHION WATCHES FROM ONLY £4.99

- SEKONDA GOLD-PLATED QUARTZ £23.90
- ALFEX LADIES' QUARTZ £39.95
- ACCURIST LADIES' QUARTZ £39.90
- EVERITE 9ct GOLD LADIES' DRESS WATCH £27.90
- ZEON GOLD-PLATED QUARTZ £27.90
- SWITCH TO P.A.K.E. £25

H. SAMUEL

BRITAIN'S LARGEST JEWELLER

100 GOLDEN YEARS

100 MORE BEAUTIFUL GIFTS IN OUR CHRISTMAS CATALOGUE. Pick up your free copy in store today. For your nearest branch Phone 021-354 3571

All items featured also available at all branches of JAMES WALKER. Prices apply to England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Savings quoted are based on a comparison with the manufacturer's recommended selling price (RSP). *Normally prices shown have previously been charged at all H. Samuel branches. Swiss watches are sold at Manufacturer's Recommended Price. Some items are catalogued to show detail. H. Samuel Ltd, 113 Chancery Lane, Birmingham, B1P 1DG. Tel: 021-354 3571

General Moscov... scrap of...

WORLD ROUND

Italian V... linga C...

Party res...

trade c...

brother

brother

Soviet defence cuts

General denies that Moscow means to scrap old tanks only

From Mary Dejevsky, Moscow

A senior Soviet army officer has denied that the Soviet Union will scrap only old tanks when it fulfils President Gorbachov's pledge to reduce its forces in Eastern Europe...

At the same time Major-General Yuri Lebedev, deputy head of the Armed Forces' General Staff Directorate, conceded that there was "apprehension" in the middle ranks of the armed forces about defence capacity and possible loss of jobs.

Most trepidation, General Lebedev told journalists, originated from comparisons with the effects of the cuts decreed by Khrushchev in 1961. Then, more than a million servicemen were demobilized and some had been left without work for six months or more.

Now officers would account for one seventh of the reductions and the cuts would be more gradual, being completed over a period of two years, the general said.

Officers were now given a highly technical training and their skills would be readily applicable to the civilian economy.

struction work after the earthquake in Armenia meant there would be less money.

In the past two weeks the army paper, Red Star, has published a number of letters expressing concern about the planned reduction.

While none has openly challenged the thinking behind Mr Gorbachov's initiative, some have drawn attention to the difficulty of finding housing and jobs for so many men in the civilian sector and quoted the adverse effects of the

Manila (Reuters) - The Soviet Union has hinted at a unilateral withdrawal from its military facilities at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam, Mr Raul Manglapus, the Philippines Foreign Minister, said yesterday.

Khrushchev cuts. Others also expressed the hope that Soviet defences would be sufficiently strong after the cuts.

General Lebedev yesterday drew attention to the fact that in his United Nations address Mr Gorbachov had called for "reasonable and reliable defence" for the Soviet Union.

This is a slight difference in wording from the "reasonable defence" and "reasonable sufficiency" which have occurred in Soviet defence statements

since the Warsaw Pact document on military doctrine was published in May, 1987. The word reliable may have been a concession to the military.

Echoing remarks by Mr Eduard Shevardnadze, the Soviet Foreign Minister, in an interview published the previous day, General Lebedev said that the West had a right to know what tanks and troops the Soviet Union was intending to withdraw.

But he dismissed assertions that the cuts would apply only to servicemen working on railways or in agriculture. Whole divisions were being disbanded and their weaponry scrapped. It would not be simply transferred from the front line to the rear.

Although many of the details of the cuts still had to be worked out in conjunction with government bodies in the Soviet Union and with other members of the Warsaw Pact, the proposed cuts had been planned for more than a year, General Lebedev said.

He admitted that the Soviet Union had been wrong in the past to keep information about the level of its forces secret and revealed that the Warsaw Pact was discussing publication of its own statistics. He hoped these would be available early next year.

Vienna security talks near success

By Andrew McEwen, Diplomatic Correspondent

After two years of talks on European security, hundreds of diplomats from 35 nations have cut their Christmas break to four days, compared with three weeks last year, amid signs that success is imminent.

The Vienna review of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe adjourned yesterday, but negotiators will be back at their desks on Tuesday. The review is designed to update the 1975

Helsinki Accords on human rights and other issues. It has acquired greater importance because talks on East-West cuts in conventional forces in Europe depend on its successful conclusion.

Diplomatic sources predicted that a final document committing the 35 countries, which include all Nato and Warsaw Pact nations, to higher standards on human rights, will be signed by the foreign ministers between January 16 and 20. This will enable the new forum, called the Conventional Stability

Talks, to begin soon afterwards.

A proposal by Moscow to hold an international human rights conference in Moscow has been one of the sticking points in the Vienna review. The US set stringent pre-conditions for accepting it, including a demand that Moscow should release all remaining political prisoners. Britain backed the US conditions.

Washington is expected to take the view that Moscow has moved significantly towards its demands. But Britain's approval is also required.

El Gordo's Spanish magic



Surrounded by the microphones of newsmen, Oscar Paje from San Idelfonso embraces in Madrid holds up the ball with the winning number after the world's richest lottery was drawn.

The lottery worked its annual Christmas miracle in Spain yesterday, spreading riches across the country with a tax-free total payout of more than £400 million (Harry Debelius writes).

El Gordo (the Fat One), as the winning number is known, was worth £87 million this year and went to ticket-holders in Madrid, Barcelona, Lago and elsewhere. In nearby Alcala de Henares, supporters of a modest football club were wondering what to do with their £23 million.

In Madrid, an unemployed barber found himself £242,000 richer, said he would "buy some olive trees and take it easy".

London cabs to give Nissan a lift

From Joe Joseph, Tokyo

A London black taxi on the streets of Tokyo looks only slightly more at home than a wallaby on skis - but that has not discouraged Nissan, the Japanese car maker, from a plan to import at least 200 black cabs a year from next year.

The incongruous cabs will be christened Big Bens. The deal, which is believed to be in the final stages of negotiation, is one of those masterpieces in miniature for which Japan is famous.

Nissan will gain another foothold in a classically British market, challenging the Austin Rover engines and transmissions that now do the job. It will also capitalize on the current boom in Japan for large imported cars and the Japanese people's love of almost anything non-

Japanese - as long as it is also world famous.

Almost best of all, by buying something British in return Nissan hopes to sidestep those European critics who complain that Japan never does anything to narrow its trade gap.

The black taxis will be bought from London Taxi International, but they will not necessarily remain black once here. Nissan will paint them pink, if that is what the buyer wants, and fit them with whatever luxuries their new owners are willing to pay.

The Japanese versions will be much swankier inside than the average British taxi, and certainly roomier than the standard Japanese rival, which is usually a family saloon painted yellow. The doors of a London cab may not jerk open automatically as those on Japanese taxis do - a sometimes winding experience for

the unwary foreigner - but long-legged passengers will be able to remove their knees from under their chins while passing the time in Tokyo's perpetual traffic jams.

Most Japanese taxis belong to fleet taxi companies, which are unlikely to restock their garages with what will be expensive imports: the price has not yet been set, but it will top the price of a Japanese-made luxury car. Some individual Japanese taxi drivers are, however, likely to buy the cabs as a novelty.

Nissan expects to find its biggest market among owners of banqueting and wedding halls, who will use the cabs to ferry brides and guests to receptions. Top hotels are also interested in using them as limousines for guests.

There are no plans to import any London taxi drivers. The people of Tokyo never tip.

WORLD ROUNDUP

Australian wins Maralinga claim

Sydney (Reuters) - A former Australian airman was awarded \$Aus679,500 (£300,000) in damages yesterday for radiation sickness he claims was contracted at a British atomic weapons testing site in South Australia.

A four-man Supreme Court jury awarded the damages to Mr Rick Johnstone, aged 54, against the Australian Government, which let Britain test nuclear bombs at Maralinga in the South Australian desert in the 1950s.

Mr Johnstone, president of the Australian Nuclear Veterans' Association and an RAAF airman during the atomic tests, had told the jury during the 62-day hearing that he contracted radiation sickness when he drove scientists and military personnel to test radiation levels after four tests at Maralinga in 1956. His award opens the way for claims by 43 other workers at atomic sites and for widows of those who died of diseases alleged to have been caused by radiation.

Polish party reshuffle

Warsaw (Reuters) - Poland's Communist Party has brought reformers into its leadership but rebuffed Solidarity's terms for "round table" talks on the country's future.

A two-day meeting of the Central Committee failed to provide the political impetus the Government had promised to restart talks with the banned trade union. Instead, speeches indicated that the party's attitude towards a formal deal had hardened and the prospect of talks was receding.

New men in the Politburo are Mr Stanislaw Ciosek, a moderate, Mr Wiktor Pyrkosz, a textile factory manager, and Mr Janusz Reykowski, a psychology professor.

Nuclear trade charge

Bonn (AFP) - The West German Government has begun a high-level inquiry into illegal trading in nuclear technology after a former company director was charged with selling radioactive materials to India, Pakistan and South Africa.

A former director of a Frankfurt company, Neue Technologie GmbH, which specializes in nuclear technology, has been released on bail after being charged on December 9, according to the prosecutor's office in Hanau near by. It did not name the man.

Bhutto brother order

Karachi - A special anti-terrorist court has issued an arrest warrant for Mr Murtaza Bhutto, right, who is living in exile in Syria (Zahid Hussain writes). He is the brother of the Pakistani Prime Minister, Miss Benazir Bhutto. The warrant covers other wanted in connection with the 1981 hijack of a Pakistan International Airlines plane by the Al Zulfikar group, named after his late father, which Mr Bhutto then headed.



Churbanov judges out

Moscow (Reuters) - Three judges retired yesterday to consider their verdict on Mr Yuri Churbanov, son-in-law of Leonid Brezhnev, the late Soviet leader, who has been charged with corruption. Mr Churbanov, aged 52, a former chief deputy Interior Minister, told the court that he was innocent of taking massive bribes. He was making his final plea in a 10-week trial in which eight former top police officials from Uzbekistan are accused with him. The judges are unlikely to pronounce sentence before December 26.

Small oasis of joy survives within a dying city

From Bill Keller, Leninakan

The mood in the Shaginyan household was not really festive this week, but under the circumstances it seemed an oasis of comfort and joy.

Four families clustered around the table, passing hot buttered meat dumplings and flat Armenian bread by the light of paraffin lamps. When Mr Makartich Kotoyan arrived with an unexpected guest, someone even found a bottle of vodka.

"Thank God that we remained alive," Mr Kotoyan said in his toast. "Thank God that we have such friends." A few streets in any direction lay the ruins of a city shaken to fragments by the Armenian earthquake.

But at 36 Ulitsa Mashinistov life has fallen into a determined routine, the inconspicuous normality that sometimes develops during war. No one knows how many Arme-

nians live in the ruins of Leninakan, the republic's second largest city, but the number appears to be in the thousands, and possibly in the tens of thousands.

The unlucky ones huddle against the brittle cold nights around campfires in the rubble, or hide in the brittle shells of buildings that could collapse in heavy rain or crumble at any moment.

The authorities have been evacuating people and those who refuse are moved into tents and prefabricated shacks, away from the precarious wreckage.

The fortunate ones, including most of the residents of this street, live in low-standing houses that withstood the earthquake. They have formed a living enclave within the dead city.

In the Shaginyan house, where five people once lived, there are now 20. Their beds, cots and salvaged

belongings are neatly arrayed around the sturdy little house, which is subdivided into six small rooms.

Except for a crack in one bedroom wall, the house appears untouched by the earthquake, even though vast blocks of flats, hospitals and factories nearby tumbled into the earth.

The residents range from the matriarch, Mrs Flora Shaginyan, aged 69, to her granddaughter, Anna, aged 18 months. Mr Georgi Shaginyan's bride-to-be and her father moved in after the earthquake.

Georgi, aged 25, had fashioned a crude but spacious shed alongside the family house to accommodate the 300 guests he had expected for his wedding party.

The wedding, planned for Monday, has been postponed, but the shed, heated by a wood stove, is now the communal dining room. The sister of Georgi, Yevpraxia, took shelter here with her husband and his parents.

Another room was given to a friend, Mrs Emma Alaberdyan, and her two sons, who fled to Leninakan from Sumgait, in Azerbaijan, because of attacks on Armenians in February.

The family lived in a grim hostel when they first reached Leninakan, then moved into their own flat in November, two weeks before the earthquake destroyed it.

Life on Ulitsa Mashinistov is a mix of chores and boredom, interrupted by forays for buried belongings and by occasional news of old friends found, alive or dead. In the first days the men joined in rescuing trapped survivors, but that work has virtually ended.

Survivors are being issued ration coupons through their former places of work, entitling them to queue at an assigned spot every two days for

bread, milk and a plastic bag with cheese, sausage, crackers, canned fish and sweets.

Bit by bit, some government services are returning. Newspapers are available at the railway station. A few bus routes have reopened. A local teacher said there were plans to open a school for the remaining children.

But here, around the future wedding table, the families swapped rumours, talked politics and entertained company. "They say that in Spitak, before the earthquake, when they pulled the potatoes up from the earth, they were warm," said Mr Gigan Agaryan, aged 29, a Shaginyan family in-law.

"Well, it's a rumour," he added. "But maybe if the authorities had paid attention they could have evacuated the city and no one would be dead."

New York Times

Reagan policy and Nicaragua both in ruins

From David Gollob, Managua

President Reagan spear-headed Washington's toughest effort to enforce its power and influence in the New World in decades, but failed miserably to eliminate a small fortress of the revolutionary left in Latin America which, although bleeding from its wounds, remains firmly entrenched.

"Reagan is leaving, but the revolution stays," Nicaragua government propaganda announced triumphantly on billboards and state-controlled television, as this predominantly Roman Catholic country celebrated its bleakest Christmas since the overthrow of the US-backed Somoza dictatorship nearly a decade ago.

The boast is not a hollow one, but the victory is, candidly, US officials admit the eight-year war to topple the Sandinista Government is virtually over. This leaves the Reagan Administration's policy of "containing" the left in Central America in ruins, and the incoming Bush Administration grasping for a new one. However, if the Reagan policy is in ruins, so is Nicaragua. A few items illustrate this.

Eight young men of young Nicaraguans, inspired by Sandinista promises of a new society, participated in massive numbers in the most ambitious public health programme ever seen in Central America. Through simultaneous mass vaccinations, en-

demic tropical diseases such as malaria were all but eliminated at a stroke.

By 1988 young men of the same age were streaming across Nicaragua's borders, fleeing military service and a crippled economy. In 1988 there were more than 22,000 cases of malaria, and the growing epidemic is closing in on the capital, Managua.

During the month of December, the Government devalued the national currency five times and reissued 10-cordoba banknotes stamped at 1,000 times their face value. When the currency was introduced in February,

1988, the dollar was pegged at 10 cordobas. The cordoba has depreciated 600 times since then. Projected inflation will surpass 30,000 per cent in 1989, possibly the highest rate in Latin American history.

Dozens of Sandinista cadres have been killed, not fighting the Contras, but in recent traffic accidents as the country's transport and communications infrastructure falls into advanced decay.

Hopes for short-term economic revival were dashed on December 15 when the Defence Minister, General Humberto Ortega, announced that high levels of military spend-

ing and "full mobilization" of the armed forces would be maintained for the foreseeable future, despite the fact that the Contras had been reduced to a "plague ... of bandits".

Nicaragua's growing saga of woe - the spread of poverty, malnutrition, muggers, prostitutes and beggars - is not wholly attributable to what Sandinista media call the "US war of aggression," and some government officials have begun to admit it.

Testing the limits of free speech, the self-defined "progressive but critical" newspaper, El Nuevo Diario, has begun publishing lengthy ex-

posed of corruption in high places based on revelations of Sandinista cadres. However, the Nuevo Diario crusade against corrupt practices at government-run currency exchange houses was silenced when the minister responsible issued a curt denial. For government allies, the least of liberty remains short.

The lack of any significant opposition movement cannot be explained by government restrictions on civil liberties, however. Opposition leaders have been jailed on occasion, but this harassment is extremely bland in comparison to tactics of terror and

intimidation used in other Latin American countries where anti-government protest is ebullient.

A recent opinion survey confirmed that support for the Sandinistas hovers around the 20 per cent mark. Yet support for opposition parties is even lower: less than 10 per cent.

The poverty of opposition debate and the absence of credible political alternatives are the main factors, most analysts agree. However, there are hopeful signs.

An independent group of distinguished Nicaraguan businessmen and economists, including former Sandinista foes and allies, has recently launched Nicaragua's first non-partisan "think tank" on how to reconstruct the country. The group's founders say they recognize that it is time to learn how to live with the Sandinistas, rather than "fold our arms and wait for the US to invade".

If the Sandinistas could survive the Reagan presidency, they are almost certain to outlive his successor's. The Bush Administration is toying with a more pragmatic policy. Nothing that excludes the lifting of a trade embargo imposed in 1985 and the normalization of bilateral relations will improve conditions either for business or for democracy, most Western diplomats here recognize. Bush pragmatism is unlikely to go that far.

Hope still flickers for Arias peace plan

From Tony Avirgan, San Jose

A year ago President Arias of Costa Rica had just received the Nobel Peace Prize for his Central American peace plan, and there was optimism in government circles here that 1988 was going to be the year to harvest the fruits of the initiative.

But a year later many of the hopes and dreams of 1988 have faded and there is a more realistic, although still optimistic, outlook for peace in Central America in 1989.

When the peace plan was signed by the five Central American Presidents in August, 1987, it was agreed that all moves towards democratization and negotiated ends to internal conflicts would be completed within three months. That deadline proved unrealistic and various extensions were announced.

Then timetables were altogether abandoned.

The reasons the peace plan has not been fulfilled are many. President Arias says it is a problem of words not being put into action.

"Everybody says that they support the peace plan," he says, "but I don't think everybody is very sincere ... They pay a lot of lip service to it."

Among those he holds at fault are the superpowers. He blames the Soviet Union for supporting left-wing guerrillas in El Salvador; he blames the Reagan Administration for its support of the Nicaraguan Contras.

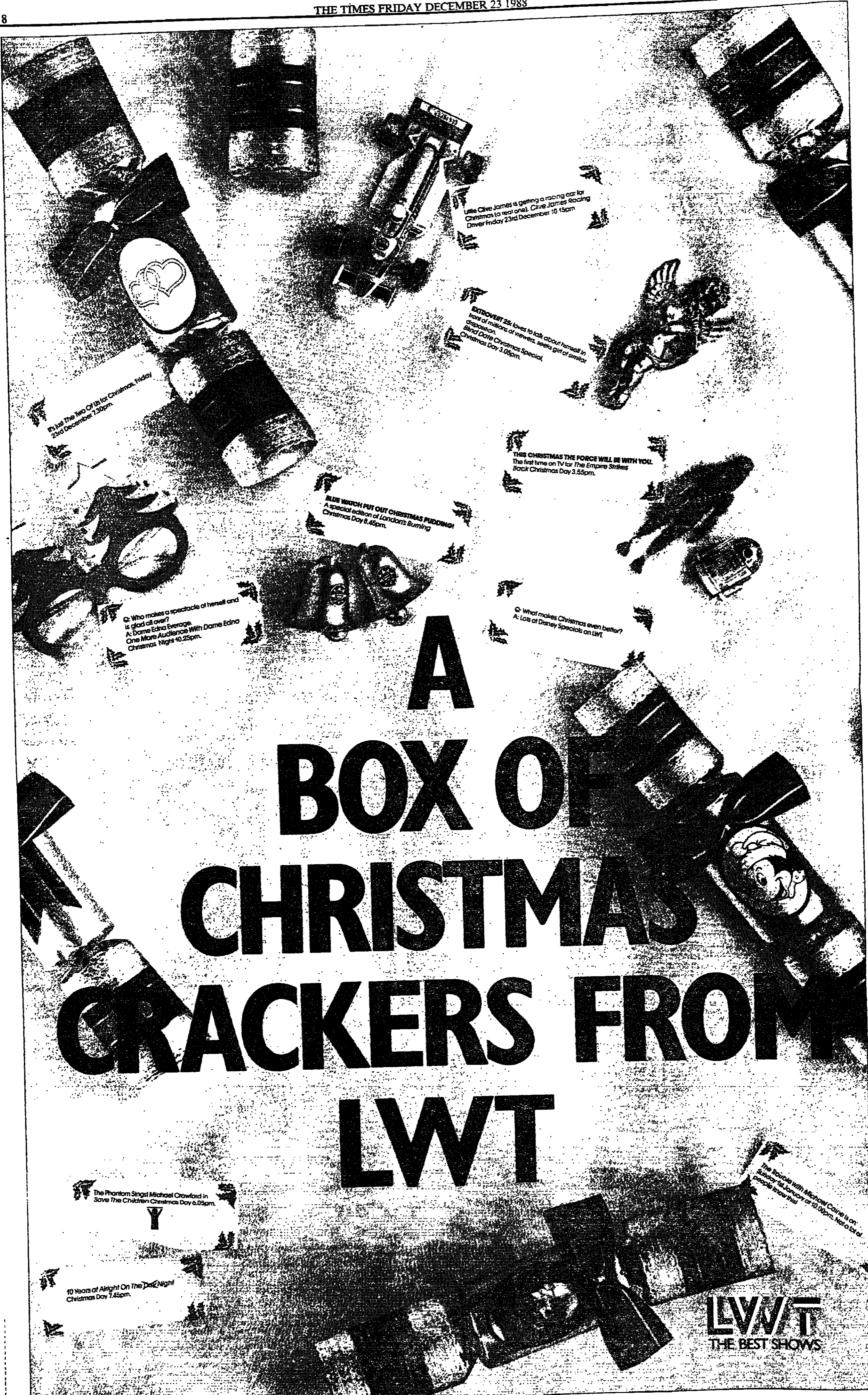
President Arias also faults the Central American countries themselves, particularly Nicaragua, which he accuses of continuing human rights violations. He also admits that human rights violations

exist in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. Even in Costa Rica there is strong right-wing opposition to joining the proposed Central American Parliament, a key element of the peace plan.

However, he does not see his peace plan as a failure. He argues that when he took office two and a half years ago Costa Rica was on the verge of being drawn into the proxy war the United States was waging against Nicaragua. Now, he says, the shooting in Nicaragua has stopped and there is no chance of his country getting involved in a war. Even if nothing more is accomplished, that is enough to justify his peace efforts.

Despite the troubles the peace plan has had, he sees hope for moving forward in 1989. That is not because of any changes in Central America, but because of changes in Washington and Moscow.

'Racist' taunt made after man is stabbed
lift ban on agency fees



It's just The Two Of Us for Christmas, Friday 23rd December 7.30pm.

Little Clive James is getting a racing car for Christmas (to read one), Clive James Racing Driver Friday 23rd December 10.15pm

EXTROVERT 22 loves to talk about himself in front of millions of viewers, sees gift of similar disposition. Blind Date Christmas Special, Christmas Day 3.00pm.

THIS CHRISTMAS THE FORCE WILL BE WITH YOU. The first time on TV for The Empire Strikes Back Christmas Day 3.55pm.

BLUE WITCH PUT OUT CHRISTMAS PUDDING! special edition of London's Burning Christmas Day 8.45pm.

Q: Who makes a spectacle of herself and is glad all over?
A: Dame Edna beverage.
One More Audience With Dame Edna Christmas Night 10.25pm.

Q: What makes Christmas even better?
A: Lots of Disney Specials on LWT.

A BOX OF CHRISTMAS CRACKERS FROM LWT

The Phantom Singer Michael Crawford in Save The Children's Christmas Day 6.05pm.

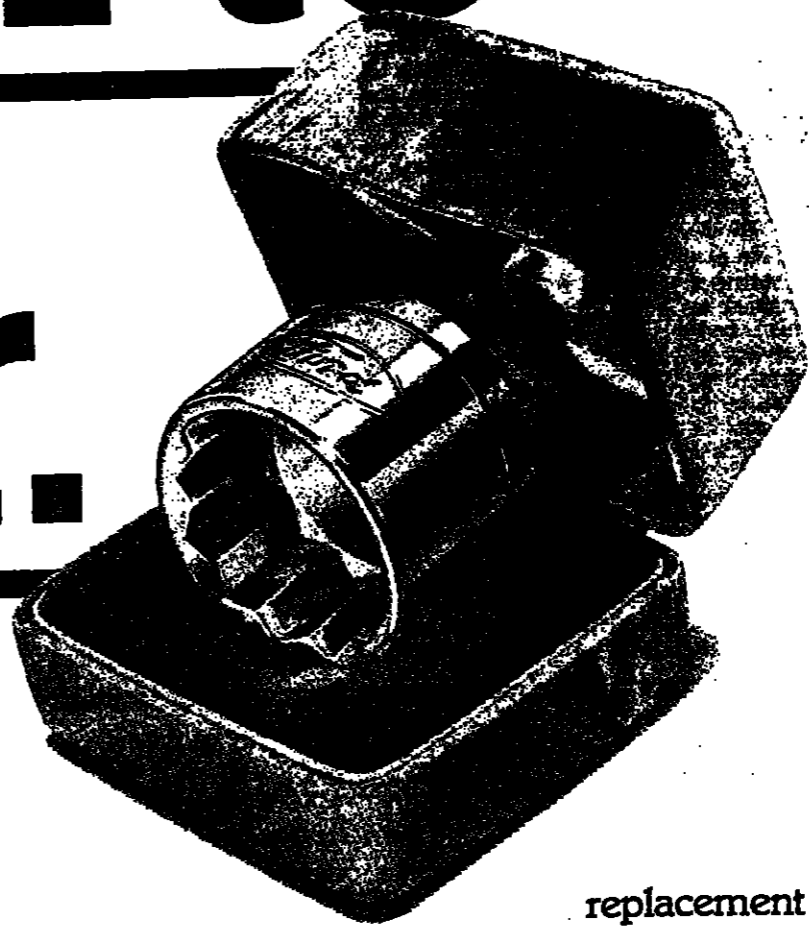
10 Years of Afloat On The Deck Night Christmas Day 7.45pm.

The Trouble With Michael Corrie is on Sunday 18th January at 10.00pm. Not a bad people know this!

LWT
THE BEST SHOWS

Beethoven
Shirley
to
Hardner
New tack
taken

The guarantee that lasts as long as you're faithful to your car.



Suppose you owned a Ford car or, maybe, a van or a Transit.

And suppose it was a couple of years old, the Assurance had expired and one day the water pump gave up the ghost.

As you'd expect, you'd have to pay for a new one and, of course, the labour for fitting it.

But here's the good news.

First, Ford parts are not excessively expensive. Second, they're usually

It's all part of the service behind every Ford.

available off the shelf. And third, most are covered by the Ford dealer's Lifetime Guarantee.

This means that, provided you had the work done by a Ford dealer who participated in the Lifetime Guarantee scheme (which most of them do), your

replacement water

pump would be guaranteed for as long as you kept the car.

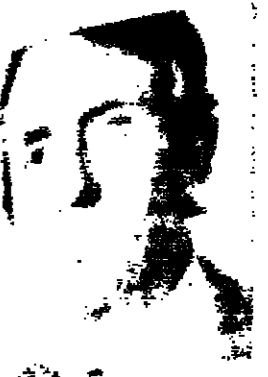
In other words, if it ever failed again, you wouldn't have to pay for another one.

Neither for the part, nor the labour.

The Lifetime Guarantee, which covers literally thousands of repairs using Ford or Motorcraft parts, is yet another reason why Fords remain Britain's favourite cars. Maybe you should marry one.

The Ford Dealers' Lifetime Guarantee. 

Solve



William G.

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

Invest

SPECTRUM

Solving the jigsaw of tragedy

PETER TRIVNOR



As the painstaking task of sifting through the wreckage of the doomed Pan-Am Flight 103 starts at

Lockerbie, William Greaves talks to Frank Taylor (above), who trains men of the Air Accidents Investigations Branch



Never jump to conclusions: a wrecked light plane is used at the Aviation Safety Centre at Cranfield to teach trainee crash detectives to sift through all the evidence

The more evidence that comes in from around the world that the passengers on Flight 103 were murdered by a terrorist bomb, the harder the scientists and co-pilots of the Air Accidents Investigations Branch will strive to find a completely different reason for the tragedy.

The Lockerbie team is made up of two main elements: experienced pilots who have come from the airlines or from the RAF, and graduate engineers, mostly with flying experience and representing a wide range of specialist sciences. Some will also have practical experience in the study of human behaviour and behind them all are such resources as the metallurgists of the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough, the fuel system testing facilities at the Cranfield Institute, and the Home Office's Institute of Aviation Medicine at Farnborough.

"If you have a theory, the only way to test it effectively is to rule out all the alternatives," Taylor said yesterday. "If you try hard enough to prove something you will do so - and it will be by suppressing all the pieces of information that don't fit neatly into the jigsaw."

On site, the team will already have divided up into separate units and will be going through a well-practised and meticulous programme of investigation, much of it ignoring all conjecture.

Every member of the 30-strong team at Lockerbie who joined the AAIB after 1977 will have attended one of Taylor's eight-week courses at Cranfield and, among other exercises, will have sifted through the wreckage of a simulated crash into which the course director will have deliberately planted enough false trails to lead all but the most wary up the wrong channel of inquiry.

Another group will look at the loading of the aircraft, both people and baggage, and yet another at all structural and maintenance records. They will all work entirely independently and, during the first few days of the investigation, meet every evening to exchange notes. At the end of all that, 99 per cent of the wreckage can be forgotten about, with only the critical sections going to the materials department at RAF Farnborough for analysis.

And all of them will know that they need look no further than the Munich crash of 1958, in which the bulk of the Manchester United football team died, to understand the wisdom of meticulous investigation - however apparently obvious the cause. "The head of that team had experienced the hazards of icing on wings, and was so certain that that was the principal factor that it was 11 years later before it was proved to be slush on the runway. There cannot be any doubt that evidence was suppressed on that occasion," Taylor says.

Then there is a complete assessment to be made of all the weather conditions along the route from London and air traffic tapes to be examined - for, although there were no messages from the cockpit in this case, sometimes the faintest click can be detected which would indicate an open microphone.

This, in turn, could indicate a suspicious time lag between the cabin crew going silent and the plane disintegrating.

Another group will look at the loading of the aircraft, both people and baggage, and yet another at all structural and maintenance records.

They will all work entirely independently and, during the first few days of the investigation, meet every evening to exchange notes. At the end of all that, 99 per cent of the wreckage can be forgotten about, with only the critical sections going to the materials department at RAF Farnborough for analysis.

The Cranfield course is attended by British AAIB members and investigators from the world's smaller aviation countries, as well as delegates from major airline countries such as Canada and Australia. All of them are put through a rigorous programme of detection.

They spend time sifting through crash wreckage, merely recording what they find without attempting to reach any conclusions, and also watching films of mock-up crashes. "This not only enables them to examine each other's eyewitness accounts, but also reveals to them just how inaccurate and contradictory those accounts can be, however well-intentioned. It is vitally important for investigators to learn how to interpret witness information and to realize that it can never be fully acceptable without corroboration," Taylor says.

In a full mock-up crash by a light aircraft on the airfield at Cranfield, the investigators are provided with air traffic tapes and eye-witness reports and significant pieces of wreckage are deliberately sited some distance away from the immediate crash area. The would-be detectives are also taken through the jungle of international agreements which dictate the procedure when an aircraft is built in one country, registered in another and crashes in a third.

"Uncovering the critical cause of the accident is only the beginning of the trail," Taylor says. "What led up to it and what followed as a consequence are just as important, as well as discovering why the fault proved a disaster. After all, aircraft are designed to absorb considerable damage while still keeping airborne until an emergency landing can be achieved."

Information provided by the investigators often leads to changes in aviation procedure. It was not until the crash at Lusaka, in Zambia, in 1977, when the tailplane came off a Boeing 707 and massive metal fatigue was found to be the cause, that increasingly regular checks were demanded on the condition of "geriatric jets".

"The metal fatigue had never been picked up by routine inspections, because the longer an aircraft remains in service, the more confident people tended to become in its durability," Taylor says. It is nearly always the detailed examination of the wreckage on the ground which provides the definitive cause of any crash. Which is why Taylor re-emphasized yesterday the appeal to treasure hunters to hand over their collections at Lockerbie. "And, even if they do it anonymously, they should attach a ticket indicating exactly where it was found. Such information could still provide the vital clue."

There is a point in the life of all parents when it becomes impossible to hide the fact that they lack the knowledge, or the honesty, or both, to answer their children's questions fully. Parents react to this exposure of fallibility either by blustering, changing the subject, being consistent with the truth, feigning migraine or referring the question to their partner. Barry Weightman started a newspaper.

A big scoop for children

Alan Franks reports on a best-seller newspaper by, and for, young people

It is called *Early Times*, is aimed at young people between four and 17, and will celebrate its first year of publication on January 13. The questions which stumped him came from his three young children, Katherine, David and Christopher, aged 12, 10 and 7 respectively, and which included variations on the classic poser: "Daddy, what's the difference between nuclear power and nuclear energy?" At that time, which was two years ago, Weightman was a 42-year-old lecturer in mechanical engineering at Imperial College, London. He had been convinced by his children, in the most practical way, that there was a gap in the market for a serious but not over-solemn children's newspaper. So he talked to a journalist friend from his days as a student at King's College, London, drew up a business plan and persuaded friends and colleagues to contribute to a starting capital of £100,000. He began by printing a run of 50,000 copies, which sold out. One year on, he sells that number regularly and reckons that, because of the natural elements of family in school in the readership, each copy of *Early Times* is seen by five or more people.

His specially founded company, Garth Publications, is now making a modest profit. The present editor is Robert Dunkley, aged 37, who has come from the *Reading Chronicle* group of local papers and now has an editorial staff of three, all in their twenties. In the traditional manner of editors, he considers his publication to be nothing less than "the most influential newspaper in the country". "We are dealing with important world issues for an audience whose minds are in the formative years. We cover those things that are going to be the crucial issues in the decades ahead."

One of the most successful and widely publicized features has been the innovation of the Press Gang, which any reader can join by completing an application form. Through this network of fledgling freelancers, Dunkley receives about 100 reports weekly of a broad range of events up and down the country. The Gang's most celebrated assignment was the interviewing of the Prime Minister in June at 10 Downing Street by four of its members. More recently, a small corps has made a four-day visit to the United States, covering a Press conference at the White House, interviewing an astronaut, visiting the offices of the *Washington Post*, going to a police station in Manhattan. An even more unusual proposition beckons in the coming year, for the Moscow press agency Novosti has invited a delegation to visit the Soviet Union. "We do get complaints occasionally," Weightman says. "I had a chap ringing up the other day to complain about an article on Santa Claus. His objection was that it could be read by a young child in such a way as to suggest that Father Christmas didn't exist. I took that very seriously indeed."

Alan Franks. A special 12-page edition of *Early Times* is published free with *The Times* on Tuesday.

Once upon a perfect time...

Most people look forward to Christmas, but this should not allow us to forget those in our community for whom it represents a period of desolation, a time when they are cut off from their normal source of consolation. For MPs, the ten-day Christmas recess comes as a bitter blow. Mercilessly locked out of the Chamber, in which they have grown used to setting the world to rights, they roam their constituencies like men adrift, their opinions unheeded and unsought. Last Tuesday, with only two condemning days left, a group of 54 MPs managed to cram in a bit of last-minute condemnation when one chance upon a children's book called *Abigail On The Beach*. "Unsuitable," gasped Mr David Tredinnick (Cons, Rosworth) as his 53 sensitive friends elbowed in to have a look, too. In *Abigail On The Beach* a six-year-old girl says to two boys: "You touch one of my towers and I'll get my daddy to hang you both upside down by the heels. He's in the Mafiosi. Oh, horror! Meanwhile, Abigail's daddy is drinking

"three cans of beer". Oh, shame on Abigail's daddy! The author does not even have the sense to suggest that it is a low-alcohol beer, of the type favoured by Mr Bottomley. "I think that it would encourage a young child to think drinking beer was a nice thing to do," Mr Tredinnick commented. Oh, the wicked lies of Abigail's publishers!



CRAIG BROWN

The 54 MPs who signed the *Early Day Motion* calling on Collins to withdraw the book have now done everything they possibly can to prevent marauding bands of six-year-old alcoholics and their Mafia fathers terrorizing our beaches. But all decent people will wish them to take their campaign of condemnation much, much further. Already, a special commission has been set up to investigate widespread violence trading under the title of "children's entertainment". In January Mr Douglas Hurd will release a "Freedom from Fairytales" White Paper which will herald a crack-down on this type of "entertainment." Among his likely targets are: *Goldilocks*. The first scene - in which a young girl is guilty of breaking and entering a home owned by three bears - must in future be rewritten to include her arrest by an astute member of Neighbourhood Watch. In subsequent scenes, the three bears will be seen eating their porridge in peace. *Snow White*. This tale involves a poisoned apple. The Government would like to make it clear that there is no such thing as a poisoned apple, though the young, sick and elderly should avoid all apples, and everyone else should cook apples for at least 25 minutes before eating them, or otherwise send them straight to Armenia. *Georgy Porgy*. This wholly unsuitable nursery rhyme in which Mr G. Porgy, unemployed, indecently assaults young women and then tries to evade arrest must on no account be recited in the home. This restriction also applies to "London Bridge Is Falling Down", which erroneously suggests structural faults in a monument regularly inspected by the Ministry of the Environment, "Oranges and Lemons", which includes scenes of mass decapitation, and "Three Blind Mice" which, following complaints from the RSPCA, has been deemed "gratuitously violent". Leader of the special commission, Sir Humphrey T. Dumteigh, MP for the safest Conservative seat in the country, already claims to have witnessed far worse. "I have seen elderly, defenceless ladies shut in cupboards by transvestite wolves, young girls mercilessly tormented by their older sisters, senior citizens thrown into blazing furnaces by children and a young girl and boy going up a hill and falling from a great height, with serious injury," he says. "Whatever happened to old-fashioned children's entertainment?"



A SMILE COSTS NOTHING. UNFORTUNATELY THIS IS NOT QUITE TRUE.

It's easy to say the best things in life are free. Especially when you're well-fed, well-housed and well looked after.

But many of the children and young people we work with at The Children's Society have less than their fair share of life's advantages.

We know exactly how to put smiles on their faces. But it all costs money. Just imagine how much it costs to run family centres, in underprivileged or inner city areas.

To run refuges and advice centres for young runaways living rough on the streets. Or houses in the community where young people who are disabled can lead as near to ordinary lives as possible.

The truth is that no matter how hard we work we still have this one big handicap - a shortage of money.

And that's something you can overcome, by filling in the coupon below.

I want to help The Children's Society's work with young people. I enclose £30 £20 £10 Other £..... Please make cheques payable to 'The Children's Society', or write your Visa or Access number here..... Name:..... Address:..... Postcode:..... Please help us by sending your donation to The Children's Society, FREEPOST, London WC1X 0BR, or telephone 01-837 4299.

The Children's Society MAKING LIVES WORTH LIVING A Voluntary Society of the Church of England and the Church of Wales



1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone: 01-782 5000

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FIRE-EYED DEFIANCE

"The crash of the whole solar and stellar systems could only kill you once", Lockerbie's most distinguished local hero, Thomas Carlyle, once wrote... The crash of the whole solar and stellar systems could only kill you once...

out theory of how to dominate democracies by power and fear. Terrorism can only be countered by vigilance and a willingness to respond in kind. The deaths around Lockerbie must strengthen the will for those responses.

A PALACE FROZEN

President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, whose long rule has reduced his rich country to penury, has never subscribed to the tired colonialist notion that beggars cannot be choosers.

citizens in Belgium to remove themselves, and their assets, from the country by the month's end. The Belgian Government humbly sent its Foreign Minister, Mr Leo Tindemans...

IN ASHES AGAIN

The collapse of England's cricket tour of New Zealand is a sad but predictable consequence of Pakistan's refusal to take part. The triangular one-day tournament which would have underpinned the tour financially...

means of reprisal would be to ban only those players from countries which have acted in this way - in this case, for instance, Pakistan and India.

New backing for 'big science'

From Mr Amadee Turner, QC, MEP for Suffolk and East Cambridgeshire (European Democrat (Conservative)). Sir, Your leading article of December 19 rightly welcomes the British Government's decision to back big science. Over the past two-and-a-half years I have, as European Democrat spokesman...

A test of Palestinian promises

From the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. Sir, Lord Rothschild (December 21) is right. The shift in position by the Palestine National Council in Algiers (reports, November 15) should be put to the test of serious, searching and specific negotiations.

him that the PNC decision replaced the PLO charter in relation to the existence of Israel. Bassam Abu Sharif replied that it did. He repeated what he had written in the MidEast Mirror magazine on November 28, namely: The Charter of the PLO... has been superseded by the decisions of the PNC, the author of the Charter.

Benefit threat to hostel residents

From Mr Alfred Morris, MP for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Labour). Sir, The Department of Social Security must be stopped from inflicting further hardship on thousands of disabled people, and among others, women and children who have fled from violence and now live in hostels run by voluntary organisations such as Mencap, Mind and Women's Aid.

Those who run the hostels tell me that, in consequence, 1,750 of their hostels will close at a stroke and that most of the people who live in them will have nowhere to go. Many will have to join the growing ranks of the pavement-poor whose living conditions on the streets of some of our major cities, as I know well as a trustee of Crisis at Christmas, so utterly disgrace contemporary Britain.

Rights of accused

From Mr T. G. Stanton. Sir, I am a staunch Tory. I am not soft on terrorism. I am not soft on terrorists. Unlike Mrs Thatcher, I can distinguish those who are accused of being terrorists from terrorists, since the two are not necessarily the same.

The eggs scare

From Mrs Hilary Barker. Sir, All this attention and Government support being given to egg producers in the light of the salmonella scare leaves me cold. It is not that I don't sympathise. My husband is a pig farmer and, like many, has been struggling to survive since pig prices plummeted a year ago - a result of cheap imports of pork becoming available because of subsidies given to Danish and Dutch pork producers.

At a time when the case of the Guildford Four is still under review, and the only evidence against them is "confessions" obtained (a) without a solicitor; (b) during long periods of detention; and (c) whilst they still had the right of silence, it is unbelievable that a Government which pretends to believe in law and order wants to abolish the right of silence, withhold the right to see a solicitor in serious cases, and allow periods of detention which the European Court considered unreasonable.

Teacher transfer

From Mr Nigel de Gruchy. Sir, I do not wish to comment on the crisis in the Highbury Quadrant school (report, December 13; letters, December 14, 16, 19, 21) as I am not privy to all the facts. However, I note with just a little pleasure that, according to Neil Fletcher, Ilea leaders are at last converted to the commonsense proposition that "teachers are best employed to teach".

Identity cards

From Mr Hugh J. Greenhalf. Sir, With reference to your report (December 15) concerning the possible introduction of identity cards, I wonder how many of your readers still possess their national registration identity cards issued during the Second World War.

Exam boycott

From the General Secretary of the Association of University Teachers. Sir, Vice-chancellors and leaders of universities claim (December 17) that the examination boycott proposed by the Association of University Teachers (AUT) is indefensible, and threaten to resign from the AUT if it proceeds.

Aids charter

From the Chairman of the Council, British Medical Association. Sir, The BMA believes that public education is the only way to contain the spread of HIV infection and that every effort must be made to give the public the facts.

Traffic troubles

From Mr Brunson Yapp. Sir, Traffic conditions in London (and not only London) are bad, but Christmas is not a time to be gloomy, and your readers might be reminded that within living memory things were much worse. This can be illustrated by two true stories.

As an undergraduate in the late 1920s, in order to go home for the vacation I had to travel between Liverpool Street and Paddington, which I normally did by Inner Circle. Once, having plenty of time, I decided to walk. When I reached Holborn Viaduct I found myself alongside an ordinary double-decker bus. It went ahead of me for a little, and then I caught it up, and this leaping continued until our ways parted at Marble Arch. I walked fast in those days, but even so, allowing for having to wait like the bus, at road junctions, I must have averaged less than 3 m.p.h. The bus therefore must have averaged the same, on a straight road for two and a quarter miles.

Tucking in

From Mrs Joan Lane. Sir, For an expression of true hospitality I do not think one could improve on that of a retired farmer friend of my childhood, who at Sunday tea, to which I was often invited, would say "Come on now, back yer cart up!"

ANNOUNCEMENTS & PERSONAL

'Racist' aunt made after man stabbed

New 475... should ask...

BIRTHS

NEWSTER - On December 20th 1988, to Walter and Richard, a daughter, Rachel Elizabeth...

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

OSBORNE - On December 22nd, 1988, at St. Mary's, a daughter, Catherine...

DEATHS

ACTON - On December 20th 1988, at a short, acute illness, Edward...

BLACK - On December 20th 1988, at home in Fleet, Colonel Jack...

ANNOUNCEMENTS A GREAT CHALLENGE PROFIT FROM HUMAN VALUES

Did you read about this great challenge in The Times last week? Now that the challenge is out in the open...

FARHAD HORMOZI GREATER LONDON FUND FOR THE BLIND

THE BUDDHA: The sacred text of the Buddha...

MEMORIAL SERVICES LORD WARE - A Memorial service will be held at West Park...

BIRTHDAYS MERITT - On December 21st, Dr. Denis McVicar...

IN MEMORIAM - PRIVATE LAKONIA - In memory of Cuy Robinson...

ANNOUNCEMENTS M. YEE - Last year has been wonderful...

SERVICES HELENA INTERNATIONAL Established 1974

WANTED WE WISH to purchase decorative metalware...

FOR SALE ON THE 1ST DAY OF CHRISTMAS MY TRUE LOVE SENT TO ME

Topography, History and Politics of Arabia. 100 books as a complete set...

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS THE PIANO WORKSHOP - LONDON

ANNOUNCEMENTS M. YEE - Last year has been wonderful...

ANNOUNCEMENTS M. YEE - Last year has been wonderful...

ANNOUNCEMENTS M. YEE - Last year has been wonderful...

FLATSHARE FLATSHARE Selective Sharing Ltd established...

RENTALS KATHINI GRAHAM LIMITED Wish their clients a very happy Christmas.

LANDLORDS You will remember we recently advertised...

OVERSEAS TRAVEL NEW YEAR/HAM, excellent snow each year...

OVERSEAS TRAVEL NEW YEAR/HAM, excellent snow each year...

OVERSEAS TRAVEL NEW YEAR/HAM, excellent snow each year...

OVERSEAS TRAVEL NEW YEAR/HAM, excellent snow each year...

OVERSEAS TRAVEL NEW YEAR/HAM, excellent snow each year...

OVERSEAS TRAVEL IT'S ALL AT TRAILFINDERS

AFRICAN SPECIALISTS Low cost fares to Africa, Asia, USA...

WINTER SPORTS SNOW SNOW! EXCITING CHRISTMAS SKIING!

U.K. HOLIDAYS INSTANT SERVICE Ltd. London, Kingston...

LEGAL NOTICES NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN...

LEGAL NOTICES NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN...

LEGAL NOTICES NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN...

LEGAL NOTICES NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN...

LEGAL NOTICES IN THE High Court of Justice...

LEGAL NOTICES NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN...

LEGAL NOTICES NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN...

LEGAL NOTICES NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN...

LEGAL NOTICES NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN...

LEGAL NOTICES NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN...

LEGAL NOTICES NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN...

LEGAL NOTICES NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN...

Archaeology Paradox of the glorious city that became a ghost town

By Norman Hammond, Archaeology Correspondent

The mysterious Maya, creators of a unique civilization 2,000 years ago in the jungles of Central America...

Latest wills

Mr John Noel Lysberg Barber, of London SW10, author and journalist...

Appointments

The following are appointed to the British Hallmarking Council: Trade Members: Mr M. Darr...

Cancer Research Campaign

WE CAN'T CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH CANCER UNLESS YOU DO. With your help our research team can bring skilled care...

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANNOUNCEMENTS M. YEE - Last year has been wonderful...

FESTIVE SEASON DEADLINES NEW YEAR

The Sunday Times - January 1st - We will be publishing Copy Deadlines - Thurs 29th December 5.30 pm...

To Place Your Classified Advertisement

Please telephone the appropriate number listed below between 9am and 6pm. Monday to Friday, or between 9.30am and 1.00pm on Saturdays.

Can you always get your copy of The Times? Dear newsagent, please deliver/save me a copy of The Times. NAME ADDRESS

Royal Society of St George A City of Westminster branch of the Royal Society of St George has been formed...

Lincoln's Inn Mr James Robert Reid, QC, has been elected a Bencher of Lincoln's Inn.

Public Notices CHURCH COMMISSIONERS NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN...

FRIDAY PAGE

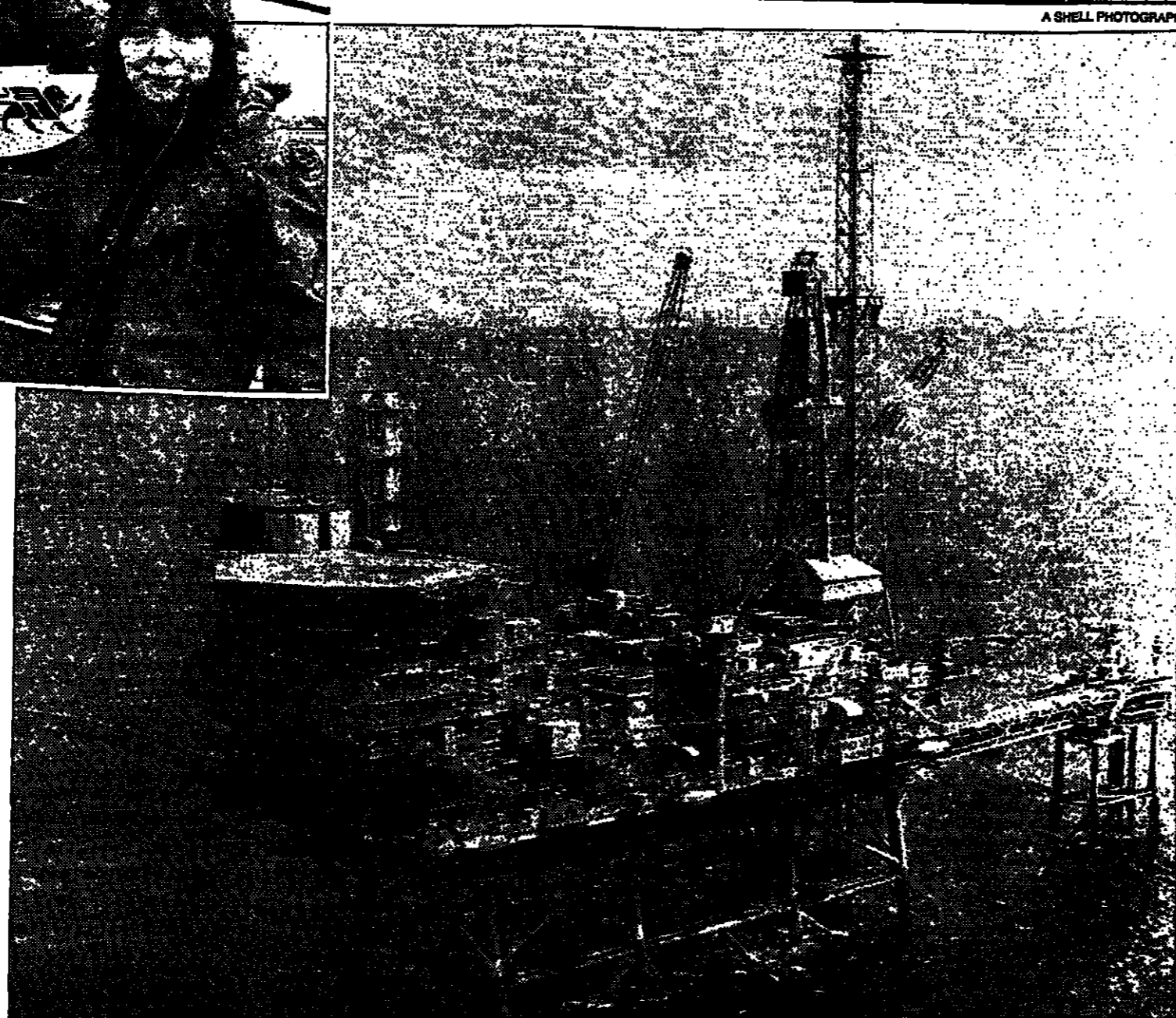
st in a House... claims unless fault



Karen Angus: 'living in a cube'

Christmas on rigs is not for men only. Sally Kinnes meets the women who will be there

Fulmar Alpha is an oil production platform about 150 miles off the coast of Dundee. At this time of year the days seem even shorter and darker than they are on the mainland and from the portholes everything outside looks grey. Inside, in the necessarily confined living conditions, it has traditionally been a man's world, where the "North Sea tigers" live and work. There is no written rule, but women have not been encouraged. Gradually, however, the rigs are changing. Tomorrow night when the Fulmar's crew pile into the heli-hanger for a special Watch Night service which will be broadcast live on BBC Scotland, there will be a few women there too. Most of the jobs open to women offshore are in catering. This may seem a stereotyped role for a woman, but Karen Angus, aged 24, who works for CCG Catering as a stewardess on the Fulmar, thinks it is an achievement for women to be working there at all. "We've got a long way to go but the first step's been taken."



Making waves: life on the Fulmar production platform in the North Sea is changing and this Christmas women will be celebrating with the men

Oil riggers of '88

It has been an uphill struggle. Alison Wood, the personnel manager of CCG, had to "fight very hard" when she first wanted to go offshore several years ago. "Every one put up barriers. They said, 'Oh you don't want to up in a heli-hanger. You wouldn't like it on a rig,' and I thought damn it, I'm going to go." There is still not a flood of female applicants for offshore jobs. "I advertised for stewardesses now, 95 per cent of the replies would be from men," says Alison, clearly disappointed by the female response. "I think females are letting our sex down by not pushing themselves to go." For the oil companies it may well be good psychology to have women working offshore. "The standard joke is that after-shave sales go up immediately in the bonded stores as soon as women go out," she says. "But lots of clients are saying it improves the atmosphere immensely. It's much more relaxed." Friendships are made, but though Karen has been asked out a couple of times, she has not gone. "The feeling is very much that you are there to work," she says. "I wouldn't say any romance blossoms on the rigs."

Though Alison thinks most men are now in favour of women working offshore, she still finds pockets of prejudice. "You know women are more acceptable on some rigs than on others. Some men still think it's an invasion of their privacy and they usually get out of it by saying that the accommodation isn't suitable." Everyone who works on the rigs has to have a survival certificate, awarded after an intensive five-day course. Coping with simulated fires and finding your way out of smoke-filled rooms is part of the first day's training. "If you're claustrophobic you could really panic," Karen says. "The place is burning hot, there's a fire down below, and you've got to walk along a steel gantry about 30 feet up in the air." Lifeboat drill comes later - "if your coxswain's snuffed it you've got to be able to launch the lifeboat" - but it was the helicopter underwater escape training that Karen found most frightening. "A mock-up shell of a helicopter comes crashing down in the water, turns upside down, and you have to get out. It was terrifying." If she panicked at the time Karen has certainly kept her nerve since.

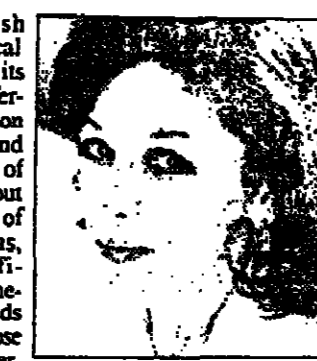
The Piper Alpha tragedy happened during her first trip offshore. "I think on your first trip you are quite frightened anyway. The alarms are so sensitive they're going off quite regularly, but everyone assured us that the layout of our rig was different from that of Piper Alpha so I wasn't unduly scared." Her biggest fear is still not that there will be an accident on the installation, but the thought of a helicopter ditching. Despite Piper Alpha, Alison has not noticed any falling off in applications. "We've had one or two people say they'd rather work on a drilling rig or an accommodation vessel, but I couldn't categorically name anyone who has left because of Piper Alpha. There are still a lot of people who think working offshore involves big money and we get a constant stream of applications, particularly at steward level."

Competition among catering companies is fierce for offshore contracts. Most belong to the Caterers' Offshore Trade Association (COTA), which agrees salary levels. Salaries are about one-and-a-half times that for the equivalent job on "the beach", an offshore term for the mainland. A steward earns about £10,400 a year and a chef about £12,500. The money is certainly one of the main attractions for Karen. She has, for the moment at least, abandoned her first career as an occupational therapist and now sees herself making a career offshore. "At the moment it's just a job, but I don't imagine I'll be a stewardess forever." Some find the shift pattern of two weeks on, two weeks off, difficult but others run businesses in between shifts. Others, like Kate McLennan, a stewardess on the Fulmar, who speaks as though she could have no better job, grab a few days abroad every fortnight. Karen spends most of her free time riding her 750 Kawasaki motorbike. "On the installation it's like living in a cube for two weeks. You make the best of it while you're there, but you do miss being able to jump in the car or going to the pub."

For safety reasons no alcohol is allowed on the installation and the first stop homecoming crews make is to "the Cit", the Criterion Bar opposite Aberdeen Railway Station. But for the festive season, Shell, the owners of the Fulmar, are making an exception to the no-alcohol rule. Everyone is allowed one can of lager, one can of export, and seven ounces of wine for Christmas Day and again for New Year's Day, though CCG is asked not to send it all at once lest it is stockpiled. For the catering staff, Christmas is the most important time of the year. "On an oil rig everyone accepts that they don't know everyone else's job, but everyone thinks they know how to cook," Alison says. "So at Christmas the chefs really have a chance to show off."

Science of the obvious

The British Psychological Society held its annual conference in London this week and did a bit of thinking about the value of soap operas, the significance of whether husbands or wives choose wine at dinner, and the positive role of supportive teachers in the achievements of gifted children. I met most of this pass on the general theory that the so-called "soft" sciences are accurately named. Then, on Tuesday, Dr Peter Bull of York University, who specializes in inter-personal communications, unveiled his analysis of political interviewing on television. Mrs Thatcher, he announced, evaded 56 per cent of questions put to her, while Mr Kinnock clocked in with a 59 per cent evasion score. He and a colleague had scrutinized eight political interviews during the 1987 campaign, he said, and had logged 31 different evasive tactics. That is when I felt it time to jump in. Even though I have no degree in either inter-personal, or extra-personal, or even inter-personal communications, it has always seemed to me ever since I could tie my own shoelaces that evading questions which one did not like was something akin to the sucking reflex for every interviewee - political or otherwise. Of course, if one wants to address the merits of the question raised by Dr Bull, there seems to be only one thing worth saying about the whole matter. There is an assumption underlying this quantification that every time a question is not answered directly, the refusal or evasion of the interviewee is somehow an unporting thing to do. I would suggest that while this may well be true 51.8 per cent of the time, there is at least another 48.2 per cent where the question is either sheer nonsense or a polemic disguised as a question that does not deserve an answer. In fact, all the reports I heard of the psychologists' conference reminded me of nothing so much as the gatherings of the Hun tribes who inhabited the rich lands between the Don and Dnieper rivers about 2,000 years ago. Each tribe had a wise man called a *talos*, who was called upon to answer difficult questions such as who should be the next chieftain. The *talos* had many expert methods to determine such matters. One involved tying a wood-pigeon to a stake and having the candidate chieftain shoot an arrow into the unfortunate fowl. If the bird's blood flowed darkly and slowly, the young warrior's leadership qualities were in grave doubt, but if the flow was bright and copious, he would clearly make a suitable chieftain.



BARBARA AMIEL

I have no doubt that, were I to recommend this test to Dr Bull and his colleagues, they would smile indulgently. They employ only the most up-to-date, advanced and scientific methods in their studies. They after all may be called in to make assessments for employers or courts in family matters such as wardship hearings, and bring to their task a whole range of serious tools such as funny inkspot pictures, scientifically-developed job application forms, polygraph machines, voice stress analysers, acting-out dolls and the like. They are experts in their field and society accords them professional status. Indeed, they use the same language as a research chemist might; they, too, conduct "studies" and look for "experimental proof". We may resent them or joke a bit when they lord it over us with their questionnaires and tape recorders, but where is the local authority that has stopped employing or consulting them?

We may resent them, but where is the local authority that has stopped consulting them?

In the mistaken belief that these contemporary *talos* operate in a scientific field, it seems to me that we have more than once surrendered our judgement and common-sense to their studies. I suppose it is because we share the same emotional need for certainty and the same fear of the unpredictable future that drew the ancient Huns to their *talos* and his wood-pigeon. And while the advent of science has made us more sceptical of old-fashioned oracles, it seems to have made us all the more susceptible to oracles in scientific clothing. Science, after all, has proved itself by sending rockets to the moon. If a medical doctor's machines can accurately measure our heartbeat and brain-waves, why couldn't a management consultant's machine measure whether we are telling the truth? Why shouldn't we believe the psychologist's conclusion about sex education and prison reform? No reason, I think, except that the human mind is just a little too complex for the expert's machines. It is not that one should dismiss the intriguing disciplines of sociology or political science - or even human resources management - which may be studied by many intelligent and eminent people. But, like philosophy and theology, they are mere speculations about the nature of human beings and their communities. They cannot be applied like the hard sciences, nor can they replace our moral instincts as parents, spouses, judges or entrepreneurs. Flying by dead reckoning or the seat of one's pants is better, as any pilot will confirm, than flying by an unreliable compass.

OWN ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT WATCHES TODAY.
CARTIER · ROLEX · PIAGET · BAUME & MERCIER

We are able to offer no deposit, interest free credit on all jewellery, watches and gifts in excess of £400
NO DEPOSIT, INTEREST FREE CREDIT
We have had a huge impact in Britain, but furs continue to sell in other countries. We should be happy until there are no fur coats in existence anywhere.
Liz Hodgkinson
DAVID MORRIS JEWELLERS
25 Conduit Street, London W.1. Telephone: 01-499 2200 and 01-629 5142. Also at The Inn On The Park, and Carlton Tower hotels.

Why furs are in the cold

The terror tactics go on, but the battle against furs might already be won

strongly, and just about all the top models will not wear a fur coat whatever they are paid."



Luxury: but shunned by many mink and fox, is in no doubt that the British lack of interest in fur is in large part due to the anti-fur campaigners.

Debenhams, once one of Britain's biggest fur retailers, decided this year never to sell fur coats again. Several Army and Navy fur departments have closed, as have old-established shops such as Brahmans of Reading, Barkers of Colwyn Bay and Sifton Marks of Southill. Two major fur manufacturing firms, Koebel and George Smith, have folded. Why are we no longer buying furs? Is it because of changing fashion, or the campaigns of the anti-fur societies? Mark Glover, campaigns director of Lynx, the organization responsible for the famous "dumb animal" poster showing a fur coat trailing blood, and also the anti-trapping cinema film made by David Bailey, has no doubt that the lack of demand for furs is mainly due to its campaigns but he believes the recent fire bomb attacks on department stores, which have been linked to the Animal Liberation Front, are deplorable. He says: "They don't need to use these tactics. They are counter-productive. Three different opinion polls have already confirmed that more than 70 per cent of British people would not now wear a fur coat." The fur trade has always promoted a glamorous image, but since our campaign began three years ago, the public have been given the facts. Every single fur coat is produced by animal cruelty. You can't make a fur coat without cruelty. Yvonne Paul, who runs a successful modelling agency, decided five years ago that no girl on her books would model a fur coat. "I have lost bookings because of this policy," she says. "But I don't care. I am totally against fur coats, and anybody who rings me up for a fur booking will get an earful. Many other model agencies now also feel

MILLET LIGHTING SALE
UP TO 50% OFF
Millet is offering generous discounts on the world's finest collection of unique traditional and modern classic lighting. Also available is our exclusive range of occasional furniture now at half price. Prices start below £100 for our light fittings and under £50 for beautifully decorated table lamps complete with shade. Millet is also open Sundays 10am to 5pm throughout the sale.
Sheer brilliance by **millet**
NOW ON - OPEN NEW YEAR'S DAY SUNDAY JAN 1st AND BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY JAN 2nd.
Available exclusively at 197-201 Baker Street, London NW1. Tel: 01-935 7851 (opp. Baker St. Tube). Free parking outside the showroom on Saturdays pm and Sundays. OPEN SUNDAYS 10am to 5pm. LATE NIGHT THURSDAYS UNTIL 7pm.
Liz Hodgkinson

AND SO TO BED
Bass & Hudson Beds · Sofa Beds
Bedding · Bedlinen
Bedroom Furniture
Significant Savings On Our Fabulous Merchandise
Plus Clearance Items At Substantial Savings!
Winter Sale
Sale Starts 27th December
LONDON: 018 240 Kings Rd. 01-731 3593
10, 20 Baker St. 01-487 4460
96B Camden High St. 01-258 0364
BOURNEMOUTH: The Quadrant Centre,
Old Churchyard Rd. 0202 209484 (Stars 28th)
MANCHESTER: 5 Ridgefield, 07627 74881
KENWICK: Lake Rd. 07827 74881
TUNBRIDGE WELLS: 3 The Pantiles, 0892 515009
NT ALBANS: (Limes) 3 The Maltings, 0727 44233
EDINBURGH: 26 Castle St. 031-225 2575 (Stars 28th)
Free Sale Catalogue, Phone 01-731 3593
AND SO TO BED

INFORMATION SERVICE

This selective guide to entertainment and events throughout Britain appears from Monday to Friday, followed in the Review section on Saturday by a preview of the week ahead...

BOOKING KEY
★ Seats available
★ Returns only
(D) Access for disabled

THEATRE

LONDON

★ ALLO 'ALLO: Stage version of the comedy series: Gordon Keys, Carmen Silvers and all the familiar jokes...

LONG RUNNERS: ★ Beyond Reasonable Doubt: Queen's Theatre (01-734 1186)...

OUT OF TOWN

BRISTOL: ★ Beyond Therapy: Christopher Durang's sprightly comedy opens Bristol's first pub theatre...

FILMS

Also on national release
★ Advance booking possible
AU REVOIR, LES ENFANTS (Pop: Louis Malle's moving, semi-autobiographical drama, set in a provincial boarding school...



In tune: the choir of Kings College Cambridge prepare for their annual festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

O come all ye faithful

The Service of Nine Lessons and Carols from Kings College, Cambridge is for many people as integral to Christmas as the Queen's speech...

Script by John Glass. Directed by Ealing veteran Charles Crichton (109 min).

With Charles Grodin; directed by Martin Brest (125 min).

★ LEOPOLD, LEROY, ETC: Richard Hickox conducts the LSO in such old favourites as Leopold Mozart's Toy Symphony...

CONCERTS

Various concert listings including 'O come all ye faithful', 'Leopold, Leroy, etc.', and 'Who Framed Roger Rabbit'.

ROCK

★ GARY GLITTER: The seasonally active Baccarat man, still the leader of rock's pantomime tendency...

JAZZ

SUE SHATTUCK: The country's most promising jazz vocalist, backed by Terry Riley's crisp, pop-oriented quartet.

TOP FILMS AND VIDEOS

LONDON: (1) Who Framed Roger Rabbit (2) A Fish Called Wanda (3) High Spirits (4) Willow (5) Scrooged (6) Bird (7) Midnight Run (8) Like Father, Like Son (9) Au Revoir Les Enfants (10) Good Morning, Vietnam

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 20
SONTAG (b) A woman's knitted cape, tied down round the waist, from the German singer Sontag (1906-54).

WINNING MOVE

The above position is taken from the game between Anderssen (White) and Kieseritzky (Black) played in London 1851. White plays and wins. The winning move will be given in tomorrow's Times.

CONCISE CROSSWORD NO 1753

ACROSS: 1 Cleaving lady (3,3) 2 Classlike (6) 3 Vind the imponder character (7) 4 Beat heavily (5) 11 Allies (4) 12 Knower, betouchado (8) 13 Waken (6) 14 Rebel Neustria (6) 15 Spanish monastery palace (8) 20 Ship's cargo space (4) 22 Greenroom (5) 23 Glaringly conspicuous (7) 25 Portion (6) 26 Drunk (6)

ENTERTAINMENTS
OPERA & BALLET
APOLLO THEATRE
ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL
LONDON OPERA HOUSE

ENTERTAINMENTS
THEATRE
APOLLO THEATRE
ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL
LONDON OPERA HOUSE

FOR CHILDREN

SANTA SPECIALS: Aboard steam-hauled trains, Father Christmas hands out presents to children, punch to adults, mince pies to dogs...

OTHER EVENTS

LATTIMERIA CHALUMNAE - A LIVING FOSSIL: Just opened at the Natural History Museum, a special exhibition about the last of its kind...

BOOKINGS

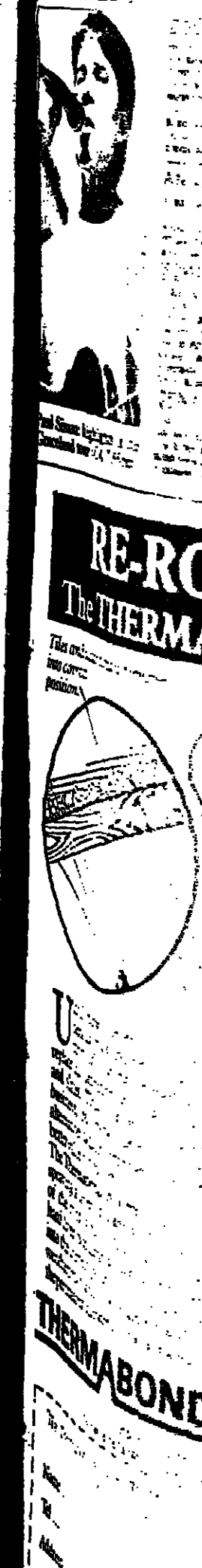
RSC AT THE BARBICAN: New productions of The Churchyard Play and Three Sisters; also The Winter's Tale, Measure for Measure and The Taming of the Shrew...

LAST CHANCE

MARTIN ALLEN: Sculptor-photographer plus old beer cans to creative use. Ends tomorrow.

CINEMAS

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS: PRECIOUSLY FILM: Recorded in 1907, the first film ever made...



BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Crown Industrial bid for Cundell lapses

Cundell Group, the Chelmsford, Essex, packaging company caught up in a three-way battle, says the bid for the company made by Crown Industrial Holdings has lapsed.

Crown initially bid £28.8 million in cash for Cundell in November, upsetting an earlier agreement between Cundell and Ferry Pickering to merge.

Erskine buys US dealer

Erskine House is buying Edgemont Sales, a Sharp copier dealer in Los Angeles with annual sales of more than \$7 million (£3.9 million).

Rolls stake for Japanese

Ishikawajima-Harima Heavy Industries of Japan has bought a 5 per cent stake in the RB211-524 aero engines being developed by Rolls-Royce.

Cambridge sale plan

Cambridge Instruments, the scientific equipment manufacturer whose interim profits fell by 17 per cent to £2.29 million, has confirmed that it is selling its industrial division.

The group said yesterday that talks are in progress but if the deal is not agreed by March 31 1989, the operation will be closed.

Trust lifts its dividend

Bankers' Investment Trust is paying a fourth interim dividend of 0.66p, making 1.97p for the year to end-October, against 1.6p.

Same again at Radiant

Radiant Metal Finishing, the metal finisher and property developer, is paying an unchanged interim dividend of 1p a share on operating profits of £164,000 (£110,000) for the six months ended August.

US deals for Davy

Davy Corporation is acquiring two companies in the United States for a total of \$2.95 million (£1.64 million), to be funded by the placement of one million Davy shares at 164p each.

Craze Services will cost \$2.5 million, of which \$1.5 million is payable immediately, and Hoist & Crane Enterprises will cost \$450,000, also payable immediately.

Strategy blot on the MCC picture

TEMPUS

Robert Maxwell is strapped for cash. Few things can be said with any certainty about the affairs of his eponymous quoted vehicle, Maxwell Communication Corporation.

So the £265 million management buyout of BPCC, his commercial printing operation, betrays signs of a deal arranged in haste.

Mr Maxwell's growing credibility problem in the City is reflected by the impossibility of obtaining a firm broker's profits forecast - even Alexander Laing & Cruickshank, his own broker, is unwilling to give a figure.

A charitable estimate would suggest pre-tax profits of £300 million in the year to end-March 1991, once all the dust has settled, the two big acquisitions have been consolidated and disposals made.

This multiple is unlikely to shift upwards much, given the market's belief that any improvement could trigger another hefty rights issue.

Against this, BPCC was sold on an exit multiple of 13 times.

es, if the £30 million of properties and £6.3 million of assets retained are added back. This implies at least some dilution of earnings after the sale.

Mr Maxwell's decision to buy back a near-25 per cent stake in BPCC has also raised eyebrows. He is paying just £21.6 million for a quarter of the reconstructed company that could eventually be floated at about £400 million.

A further complication for MCC is Mr Maxwell's decision to move his financial year-end back by three months to end-March, even though Macmillan, OAG and his own company previously shared the same January to December accounting period.

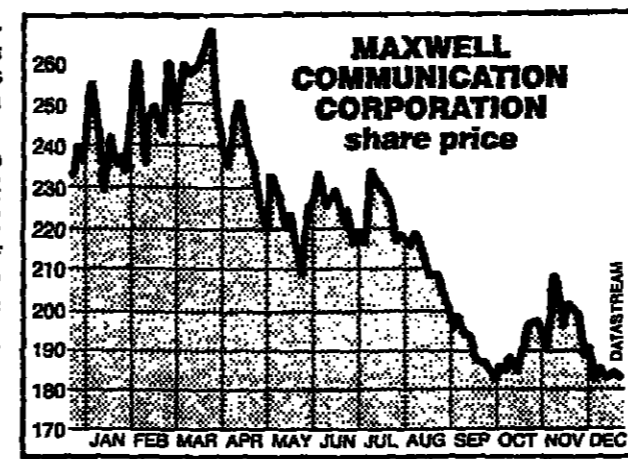
The effect is that MCC will not have to provide full accounts until the summer and will not therefore show the effect of the acquisitions on the balance sheet until disposals have been made.

The shares have slumped from a high of 395p last autumn to 185p, up 3p, yesterday. Even at this low level they cannot be recommended until Mr Maxwell gives more indication of his strategy.

Tootal

Tootal looks set for another assault by the Australian entrepreneur Mr Abraham Goldberg, who popped up with a 9.2 per cent stake in the textiles group.

Against this, BPCC was sold on an exit multiple of 13 times.



his textiles group Entrad, the next one could be spectacular. It is no secret that Mr Goldberg's failure to reach an accommodation with Tootal, even though he was briefly on the board, led to a distinctly cool relationship on both sides.

Since then Entrad has restructured its operations radically and is now an investment rather than a trading company. Intriguingly, the stake in Tootal appears to have been bought on behalf of Mr Goldberg and his family rather than through a corporation.

The eventual intentions of the boarding party remain deeply unclear. Entrad is capitalized at a mere fraction of Tootal's £315 million, and it is doubtful whether Mr Goldberg's personal wealth exceeds that of his main vehicle.

Steel fight set to continue

By Colin Narborough

The West German steel industry is determined to continue its legal battle over £930 million of "illegal" and "excessive" aid to British Steel despite the political reverse the German mills have suffered this week concerning aid to Italy.

The West German Steel Association of Dtl strongly condemned the European Economic Community decision to allow a large payment of fresh aid to Finsider-Iliva, the loss-making, state-owned Italian steelmaker.

It expressed "deep disappointment" that Bonn had also decided to end its lone opposition to the latest EEC aid decision.

have been the twin targets of the largely private-sector German steel industry's campaign to force an end to subsidies in the EEC.

A statement from the West German Steel Association said the decision by the EEC ministers was a "clear warning signal" that aid was still a tool of the European steel industry, despite all the declarations to the opposite effect from politicians.

"The credibility of European steel policy has been shattered by this to a hitherto unknown degree," the association said.

EEC internal trade ministers agreed yesterday to an aided overhaul of Italy's state-owned steel industry after Bonn dropped its opposition

to the plan. Dr Axel von Plagemann, spokesman for the West German Steel Association, said the Finsider decision would not deter his organization from its legal action against the European Commission over the aid paid to British Steel prior to privatization.

The case, brought before the European Court in July, is still in its written procedure stage, but a judgement is expected next autumn, possibly before investors are due to pay the second instalment on their BS shares on September 26.

British Steel is confident that it will not be forced to repay any of the disputed aid, but gave a warning in its prospectus that it could give no assurances.

Slowdown in exports for wool textiles

Wool textile exports slowed in October, the £45.9 million in shipments being a decrease of 4.2 per cent compared with the same month last year.

But exports by value in the first ten months of this year are still up nearly 3 per cent at £507 million, said the Bradford National Wool Textile Export Corporation. Exports are expected to set a record in value in the full year.

Exports of cloth, yarn and combed wool to EEC markets in the ten months were up 8 per cent. Cloth sales have risen 14.4 per cent in the period to £201.9 million, a 6 per cent increase in volume terms.

Brierley 'no longer interested in bank'

Wellington (Renter) - Brierley Investments Ltd is no longer interested in buying the New Zealand government's 84 per cent holding in Bank of New Zealand, according to Mr Paul Collins, group chief executive.

The decision follows the government's rejection on Wednesday of all bids because they were too low. Mr Collins is reported in a newspaper article as saying the company would not make another bid.

Analysts said the bank, which has assets of NZ\$17.6 billion (£6.2 billion), would fetch the government around NZ\$1 billion.

had "given its best shot" in the tender and would not resubmit a bid unless conditions became more favourable.

The bank is one of several state assets being sold to raise funds to repay foreign debt. The government still intends to sell its holding but did not specify when.

Sir Ron Brierley, the BIL chairman, is also chairman of BNZ but has stepped aside because of a potential conflict of interest.

Mr Rob Campbell, the bank's acting chairman, said BNZ would prefer either an early resolution of the situation or a postponement of the sale for a definite period.

Holiday Bonus



This week's The Sunday Times magazine comes FREE with The Times on Saturday.

The Times will see you happily through the festive season this year. The Sunday Times Magazine has a special Christmas section with games for the whole family and a Christmas songbook.

The Times is also the only quality newspaper appearing on Boxing Day. And during the holiday week you'll get a FREE special copy of Early Times, the quality newspaper for young people.

Make sure you have a good Christmas. Spend it with The Times.

Spanish holding Royal B. Appeal God to Mammon and back

New Bill sanctions studies into UK companies for foreign regulators

Wider inquiry powers for DTI

By Colin Narbrough
Surprise provisions in the new Companies Bill will enable the Government to launch inquiries into companies and institutions in Britain in response to demands from foreign regulators...

lators will apply to company law and futures, banking, insurance and securities sectors. Mr Francis Maude, the Corporate Affairs Minister, yesterday said the new provisions were an "important development" that would meet the regulatory demands of the future in an increasingly globalized market.

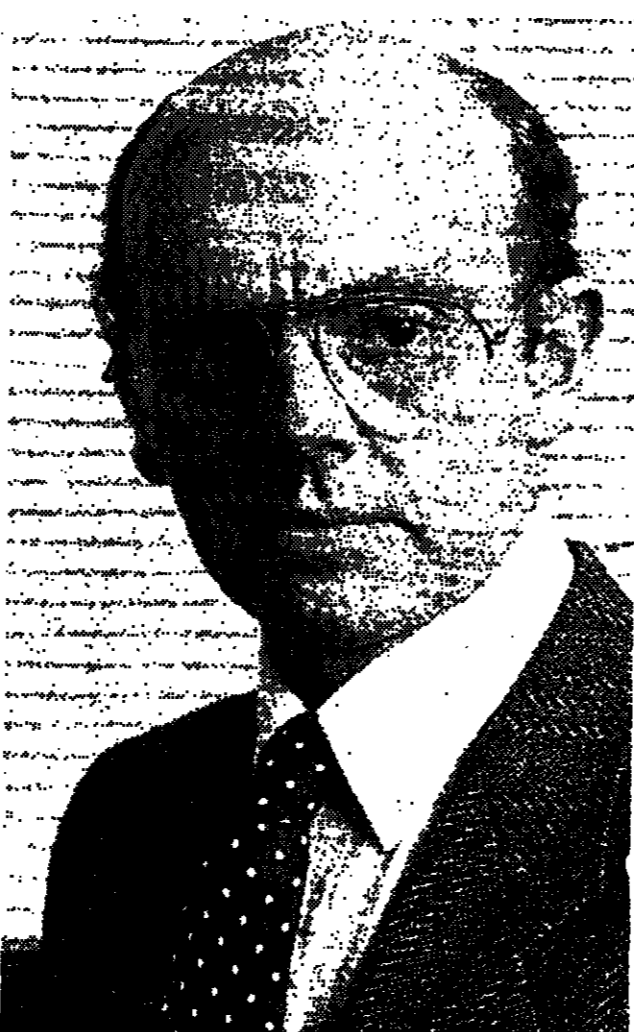
an investigation in broadly similar fashion to domestic investigations, or appoint others to do so. Mr Maude said there are safeguards for information covered by banking confidentiality, and any information obtained is protected in the same way as that obtained in domestic investigations.

Spanish lift holding in Royal Bank

By Richard Thomson
Banco de Santander, the Spanish bank, has raised its holding in Royal Bank of Scotland by 5 per cent to 10 per cent, worth around £100 million. The purchase makes Banco de Santander the largest shareholder in Royal Bank.

Kitty Little shares slide 10p on warning of lower profits

By Rosemary Unsworth
Shares in Kitty Little, the decorative fragrance group which came to Unlisted Securities Market last April, fell by 10p to 83p as the company issued a warning that profits would be lower than last year.



Small sign of recovery: Graham Webster, the chairman selling 15 million pairs a year worldwide, is thought to be worth about £35 million in Britain. Kitty Little hopes the product will become the brand leader.

London Life may fight on

By Maria Scott
London Life may try to appeal against the Appeal Court's ruling that the vote in favour of its plan to merge with Australian Mutual Provident was invalid. The mutual insurance company was refused permission to appeal to the House of Lords when the full Appeal Court judgement on its October meeting and vote was issued on Wednesday.

COMMENT David Brewerton
Painting by numbers with Healey & Baker

Property valuation has ever been more an art than a science, but Healey & Baker have employed such artistic skill in their efforts on behalf of London Shop that they may even find their certificate auctioned at Christie's. Whether it would be classified as Impressionist or Surrealist, might be best left to the auctioneers.

A most curious position

One of the most curious positions in a British boardroom is to be a non-executive director. It is generally, although by no means universally, agreed that non-executive directors are in some way a "good thing." They bring breadth of vision to the boardroom, they bring in, for a few days a year, talent and experience which could not be afforded full time.

Appeal over early water deals

By Colin Narbrough
The water companies are to appeal against the High Court ruling on Wednesday that will allow the public sector water authorities to buy into them before privatization. The appeal proceedings, which can only be initiated when the courts reopen in the New Year, may delay the scramble for control of the water companies which the High Court judgement was expected to precipitate.

Avdel bid battle near stalemate

The fight for Avdel, the industrial fasteners producer, inching towards stalemate last night as Textron, the white knight counter-bidding against Banner Industries, claimed 42.9 per cent share-holders' support. Banner, offering 89p a share, controls 43.26 per cent, putting it level with its rival, whose 92p offer is recommended by the Avdel board.

Drexel to face lawsuits after guilty insider plea

From Bailey Morris, Washington
The guilty plea by Drexel Burnham Lambert, the US securities house, in the biggest insider trading case in Wall Street history is only the beginning for the beleaguered firm which not only faces a record \$650 million (£361.51 million) fine but also a wave of potential lawsuits. Life after its fall from grace is going to be extremely difficult for the once brash company. Drexel must now fight to save its best talent and its biggest clients, many of whom said that they would defect if the firm pleaded guilty.

God to Mammon and back

From one God to another is how Stephen Hargrave, aged 33, a former financial journalist is describing his latest career move. Hargrave left the *Evening Standard* last week, where, during the past two years, he has established a name as its stock market correspondent, and he is now, I hear, going to be working alongside Lord Stevens, as head of planning at United Newspapers, his £750 million media company which has titles ranging from *The Yorkshire Post* to *Exchange & Mart*.

Leaving the herd

The head of gilt-edged sales and trading at Merrill Lynch, one Frank Leonard - no known relation of mine - has, I hear, resigned after a disagreement over policy. Leonard, aged 40, was headhunted to join the giant US securities house in the summer of 1986 and became a director of its bond division, Merrill Lynch Government Securities. Prior to that he spent more than 20 happy years with Phillips & Drew - becoming that firm's youngest ever partner at the age of 26.

Mine host

An intriguing advertisement in the latest edition of the *Mining Journal* reads: "For sale, in whole or in part, mining company with gold production. Significant profit/revenue potential. Contact Luxembourg (352) 660843." Anxious to pick up a little something in my last minute Christmas shopping, I telephoned Luxembourg, but

MARKET MEGABIDS PLC ONLY 756 SHOPPING DAYS TO 1992. Includes a small illustration of a person shopping.

Half-time loss

Northern Fine Foods saw a £162,000 pre-tax loss in the six months to September 30, from a £336,000 profit previously. Loss per share is 1.8p (3.2p eps). The interim payment is 0.75p.

Firstland drop

Firstland Oil & Gas, the independent oil company, saw a pre-tax loss of £175,000 in the six months to end-June, against a £12,000 profit last time. There is no dividend.

No payout

Pavon International lifted pre-tax profits from £193,000 to £232,000 in the six months to end-August, but is still paying no dividend.

Offer flops

Only 51.4 per cent of the shares offered by American Distributors were taken up by shareholders.

US purchase: Courtaulds, the textiles to industrial products group, is buying Andrus from Raychem Corporation for an initial \$15 million (£8.3 million). BP sells: BP has sold part of one of its North Sea blocks adjoining the Marathon offshore to its neighbour for an undisclosed sum.

Nationwide Anglia Building Society. Placing of £20,000,000 12 1/16 per cent Bonds due 2nd January, 1990. Includes logo and contact information.

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Main table containing unit trust information, including columns for 'Unit Trust Name', 'Offering Price', 'Change', and 'YTD %'. It lists numerous trusts such as 'ARNEY UNIT TRUST MANAGEMENT', 'BANKERS TRUST MANAGEMENT', and 'BARRACLOUGH INVESTMENT FUND'.

UNLISTED SECURITIES

Table of unlisted securities with columns for 'Company Name', 'Share Price', and 'Change'. Includes entries like 'A & B Securities', 'C & D Securities', etc.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

Table of foreign exchange rates for various currencies, including 'Sterling Index compared with 1975 was down at 77.3', 'DOLLAR SPOT RATES', and 'EURO MONEY DEPOSITS %'.

THIRD MARKET

Table of third market trading data, including columns for 'Symbol', 'Price', and 'Volume'. Lists various financial instruments and their market activity.

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

Table of investment trusts with columns for 'Trust Name', 'Offering Price', and 'Change'. Lists trusts such as 'ARNEY UNIT TRUST MANAGEMENT' and 'BARRACLOUGH INVESTMENT FUND'.

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

Table of London financial futures prices, including 'FT-SE 100', 'Three Month Sterling', and 'Three Month Eurodollar'.

COMMODITIES

Table of commodity prices, including 'LONDON FCM', 'LONDON METAL EXCHANGE', and 'LONDON MEAT FUTURES'.

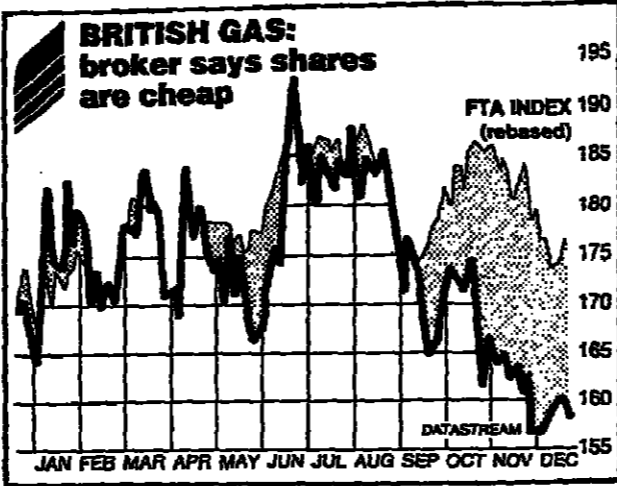
STOCK MARKET

WALL STREET

New York (Reuter) - Shares were narrowly mixed in early trading yesterday. The Dow Jones industrial average was up a point at 2,165.64.

Unigate rises to near peak for year on £1bn bid talk

The odds on Unigate, the dairy products and transport group, becoming the first important bid target in the New Year shortened dramatically following another burst of speculative buying which pushed the shares nearer to their high for the year.



BRITISH GAS: broker says shares are cheap

Hillsdown Holdings rose 5p to 233 1/2 after hearing that the powerful Kuwait Investment Office had bought an extra 500,000 shares, taking its holding to 29.4 million shares, or 7.05 per cent.

British Gas reflected the quiet conditions and eased 1p to 157p. Yamaichi International (Europe), the Japanese securities house, believes the recent fall in the share price has been overdone.

Advising clients to buy, Yamaichi says that the worst-than-expected Monopolies and Mergers Commission's findings on British Gas's pricing policy for contract customers (which account for 38 per cent of gas volume sold and 26 per cent of revenue) has kept the price unfairly depressed.

Table of stock prices for various companies including AMR, ASA, Astra, and others. Columns include company names and their respective share prices.

Ashted, the plant hire group, rose 5p to 250p on a buy recommendation from Barclays de Zoete Wedd.

The market is already talking of a possible bid of about 400p a share - which would value Unigate at almost £1 billion. Whispers in the market-places claim that a Danish consortium is lining up a bid.

The FT-SE 100 index, having struggled to establish an early rise of 1.7, finished 3.9 lower at 1,768.7. The narrower FT index of 30 shares also lost a lead to close 2.6 down at 1,432.4.

The steadier pound saw government securities sporting gains of almost 1/2 at the longer end.

Sandell Group, the West Midlands office fitting and refurbishment group, made a quiet debut on the Unlisted Securities Market following a placing by Greig, Middleton, the broker.

Table of stock prices for various companies including AMR, ASA, Astra, and others. Columns include company names and their respective share prices.

RECENT ISSUES

Equities: Apollo Metals (58p) 66+1, Apollo Watch (58p) 118, BMSS (118p) 118.

ALPHA STOCKS

Table of Alpha Stocks including ADT, Abbey, AM-Lyons, and others. Columns include company names, share prices, and other financial data.

LONDON TRADED OPTIONS

Table of London Traded Options including various call and put options for different stocks and indices. Columns include option type, strike price, and other details.

TRADITIONAL OPTIONS

First Dealings: December 23, 1988. Last Dealings: January 6, 1989. Last Declaration: March 30, 1989.

BUSINESS TO BUSINESS

Advertisement for Cellular Phones from £1.75. Features include 'Cheapest Air Time and Call Costs' and 'Approved Fax Machines from £695'.

Advertisement for Task Communications. Text: 'CONTINUE TO OFFER THE BEST PRICES AND AFTER SALES SERVICE ON A FULL RANGE OF CELLULAR PHONES AND MOBILE FACSIMILE.' Includes contact info: Tel: 0259 723718.

Advertisement for Partner required for leisure complex. Text: 'Partner required for leisure complex in the South Midlands area. Projected turnover £750,000 with 7 FTE staff. Minimum capital required £350,000.'

Advertisement for Talking Point Telephones. Text: 'All prices include VAT, installation and network charges. UNIT 2, 222 LONDON ROAD, ST ALBANS, HERTS.'

Advertisement for Teddy Bears. Text: 'The business that keeps a smile on everyone's face. NO SELLING. LOW OVERHEAD. BE YOUR OWN BOSS.'

Advertisement for Wanted to Buy. Text: 'Small building works and maintenance company in London or the South East. Reply giving details of existing workload, turnover and premises to BOX 999.'

Advertisement for LUCKY BEAR. Text: 'Company Finance over £100,000. For a mutual, no obligation Appointment, contact: 01-499 6363 Ext. 5668.'

Advertisement for French Businesses. Text: 'Home/Agency companies. Dardennes £150,000. Home/Agency companies. Dardennes £150,000. Home/Agency companies. Dardennes £150,000.'

Advertisement for Countdown to 1992. Text: 'Single realistic creative director in search of the contact with business companies in advertising agencies to acquire their creative activities in Germany.'

CAR BUYERS GUIDE

Advertisement for General. Text: 'Which makes better business sense? The National Vehicle Bank specialises in nearly new, low mileage vehicles at remarkable savings. Tel: 0352-714968.'

Advertisement for New Cars at Discount Prices. Text: 'ALL MAKES IMMEDIATE DELIVERY NATIONWIDE SERVICE. LEASING AND H.P. AT LOW RATES. PART EXCHANGE WELCOME. Tel: 01 941 5288.'

Advertisement for ITASCA/WINNEBAGO. Text: '1988 Basement model, full American spec including rear state bedroom inc en suite, 6 berth in total, micro-wave, colour TV, video, full air conditioning/heating, hi-fi system, generator, shower/central bathroom. Tel: (0284)752382.'

Advertisement for BMW Authorized Dealers. Text: 'BMW 728i 1988 E. Large huge mileage with excellent bodywork. BMW M535Ci 1986 D. Considered not with part but excellent condition. Tel: (0222) 597070/514832.'

Advertisement for SERRIA ESTATE. Text: '1988 Fiat Ritmo. Only owner. Excellent condition. 1988 Fiat Ritmo. Only owner. Excellent condition. Tel: (077) 278183.'

Advertisement for BMW 535i SE. Text: 'BMW 535i SE 1988 New Shape LHD. Electric sunroof, windows, seats, leather. ABS, alloy, air conditioning, convertible auto. 20,000 km. Tel: (0923) 856313.'

Advertisement for Mail Shots. Text: 'from overseas, save pounds on postage. Fax No. Cape Town 235649 for details.'

Advertisement for BMW 535i SE. Text: 'BMW 535i SE 1988 New Shape LHD. Electric sunroof, windows, seats, leather. ABS, alloy, air conditioning, convertible auto. 20,000 km. Tel: (0923) 856313.'

Large vertical advertisement for Jaguar and other cars. Includes text: 'Jaguar', 'TRUCE', 'NATIONWIDE DELIVERY', 'CAR PHONE', 'ROYCE & BENTLEY', 'PARK LAW'.

CRICKET

Australians hope to emerge from the shadow of Ambrose

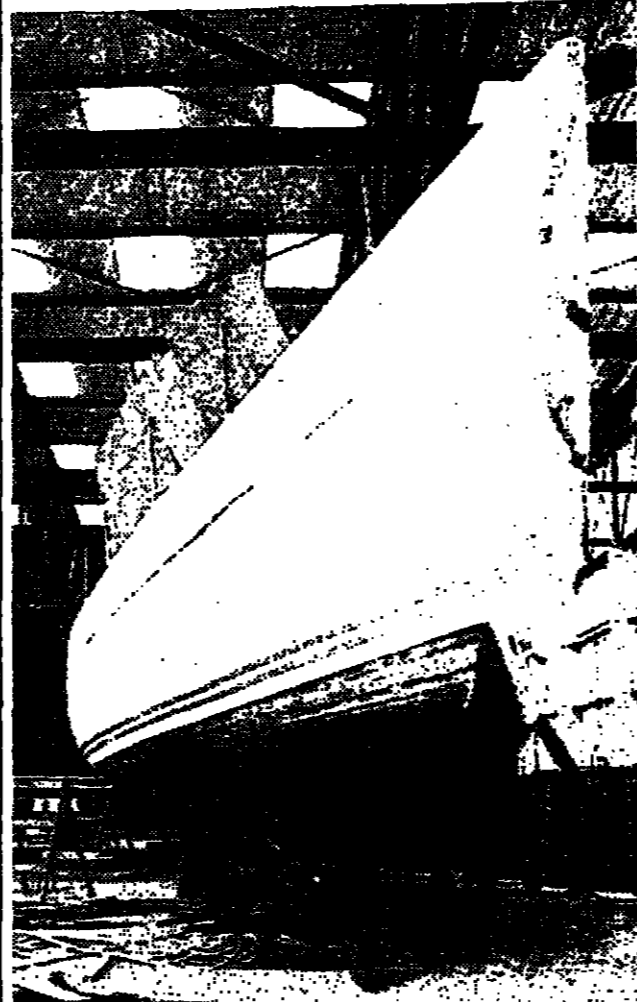
From John Woodcock, Melbourne

There is no Christmas present the Australian people might rather have than victory over West Indies in the third Test match starting here tomorrow...

Crew will rely on their wits against state-of-the-art yachts

A 32,000-mile adventure of a lifetime

By Barry Pickthall



Chequered history: facelift for a yacht that was rotting away



Fantastic support: an apprentice from Reckitt and Colman works on a plate for the boat

At noon today Tower Bridge is raised in salute to a band of happy adventurers who have pledged their souls to compete in this year's Whitbread Round the World Yacht Race...

Stalwarts against Richards Parker stands in as Sussex coach

Three of Yorkshire's most famous cricketers are opposed to the possible signing by the county of the West Indies captain, Viv Richards...

SKIING: AUSTRIANS RECLAIM DOWNHILL SUPREMACY ON FAMOUS COURSE

Daring finish gives Hoeflehner victory

Olympic champion, Leonard Seiner, finished third. Hoeflehner, fastest in the morning practice run, lost time on the middle part of the spectacular, 3,210-metre course...

SNOW REPORTS

Table with columns for Country, Location, Depth (cm), Conditions, Runs to Pistas, and Weather (°C).

YACHTING

Merit finishes 200 miles ahead of rivals

By Barry Pickthall

Merit, the Swiss Whitbread skipper, was first of the monohulls to reach the Dominican Republic at the end of the Route of Discovery Transatlantic Race...

SPORTS BOOKS: WITTY RECORD OF A COUNTY SUMMER AND CONQUERING THE INTERNATIONAL TOUR

Agnew breaks the mould Simplifying the mechanics of golf

Cricket books have been so plentiful, these past few years, that it is asking a lot of any publisher or author to come up with something appealingly different...

Getting to grips with Sumo

The best-selling martial art book in the world is a useful but inexpensive exposition of sports karate...

RUGBY LEAGUE

Fines put gag on outspoken coaches

By Keith Macklin

At first glance, the new punishment for coaches who speak ill of match officials seems severe, but the dictatorial and bordering on the undemocratic, since the penalty is instant and always the same...

Dublin has on Scotland

Musical chairs for real

St...

FOOTBALL: ITALIAN VERSATILITY PROVES TOO MUCH FOR SCOTLAND TO HANDLE AS ROXBURGH'S MEN AGAIN LOSE THEIR WAY IN MIDFIELD

Dubious decision has no bearing on Scottish demise

From Roddy Forsyth Peragia
Italy 2
Scotland 0
Scotland found the versatility and technical ability of Italy's developing World Cup final squad too great to be contained yesterday in a match which suggested that the Scottish coach, Andy Roxburgh, will continue to be frustrated by the lack of genuine class available to him in midfield.



Penalty point: Serena looks up hopefully as he fails to the ground after colliding with Gough at the start of the second half

Millwall refuse ticket offer

Millwall's supporters, whose list at Luton four years ago led to the Kenilworth Road club's ban on away supporters, will not be going back there in this season's FA Cup. Millwall said that if their home third round tie with Luton on January 7 was drawn, they would not accept tickets for the replay. Instead, the game would be shown live on close circuit television at The Den.

MPs have time to ponder membership card scheme

Members of Parliament, who left Westminster last night for the Christmas recess, will spend some of their holiday digesting a surplus of information on the Bill for the national membership scheme, which will obligate football spectators attending League matches from the spring of 1990 to have identity cards. The controversy over the Bill, to be introduced to the House of Lords in the middle of January, will escalate further when it reaches the House of Commons with the opposition parties and some Conservative MPs opposed to the Prime Minister's plan to help stamp out football hooliganism.

Musical chairs for real

The frequency and fluidity with which teams near the head of the second division keep swapping positions bears more than a passing resemblance to a well-played game of musical chairs. With a mere five points separating the top six sides, the leading pack are too tightly bunched to give away many clues as to which of them will be in pole position when the music stops and festivities cease, let alone next May. Nevertheless, in a fixture list crammed with potential 'six-pointers' the outcome of three Boxing Day encounters eventually could prove crucial.

Irish failure may lead to hard times

Northern Ireland's conclusive defeat by 4-0 against Spain in yesterday's final means contemplating not only the end of their proud World Cup qualifying record but worse still, their very existence as an international team. As long as they were qualifying for the championships (they have reached both the last two World Cup finals), Northern Ireland's financial position was a healthy one. Left to fend for themselves following the demise of the British championship, they now face the same sort of precarious existence as those other poor relations of British football, the Welsh.

Group six

Table with 12 columns: Team, P, W, D, L, F, A, Pts. Rows include Spain, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Hungary, Czech Republic, and Malta.

McAllister Thorstvedt able to challenge Mimms

Erik Thorstvedt could make his long-awaited debut for Tottenham Hotspur at home to Luton Town on Boxing Day. The Tottenham manager, Terry Venables, has finally obtained the Football Association's sanction for the Norwegian goalkeeper to play after his £350,000 transfer from IFK Gothenburg was delayed several weeks by registration over international restrictions.

Slough's chance to get even

While the race for promotion to the GM Vauxhall Conference becomes increasingly confused, the HFS Loans and Beazer Homes leagues, the Vauxhall-Opel League is in danger of becoming a two-horse race. In the last month Farnborough Town and Slough have steadily drawn away from their rivals. Farnborough's 1-0 victory at third-placed Blyth on Tuesday leaves them three points clear of Slough, who are six points in front of Stortford. Slough have two games in hand of Stortford and Farnborough one.

Non-League football by Paul Newman

Behind, have seven games in hand, have seven games in hand. The situation is even more open in the Beazer Homes League, where Merton Tydfil, fourth from bottom, are only 13 points behind the leaders, Dartford, who have three games in hand. The team in the best form appears to be Dover Athletic, who in the last seven weeks have won nine out of 11 matches and scored 36 goals in the process. Dover are now five points behind Dartford with four games in hand.

Slough's chance to get even

While the race for promotion to the GM Vauxhall Conference becomes increasingly confused, the HFS Loans and Beazer Homes leagues, the Vauxhall-Opel League is in danger of becoming a two-horse race.

BOXING

Graham is told to stay with manager

Herol Graham stormed out of Britain's boxing headquarters yesterday after losing his appeal to break from his manager, B J Eastwood. The grim-faced British middleweight champion swept out of the Boxing Board of Control's offices in London and refused to comment after learning that appeal stewards had again rejected his attempt to be freed from a three-year extension of his contract with Eastwood.

The next move must lie with Graham, who is bound to Eastwood until October 1991. Eastwood said: "All doors are open. If Herol wants to work with me, he can - I can work with anyone. If he wants the world title fight, he can have it. If he puts his affairs in order now, there's no reason why it can't be arranged and there's no reason why we shouldn't work together."

SKING

Victory goes to Cambridge

Cambridge claimed victory in the Bladon Lines University race after yesterday's giant slalom, proving the value of consistency with only one faller to Oxford's two. The men's overall title went to Crane-Robinson, of Oxford. In the women's event, Cambridge also triumphed with three falls, although Fatorini, of Oxford, won a combined title from Kearley with a three-second victory.

FOR THE RECORD

Table listing various sports results including International match (Italy 2, Scotland 0), Basketball (National Association), Golf (Schools matches), Hockey (Butterton Indoor League), Ice Hockey (National League), Rugby Union (Ulster v Leinster), and Tennis (Heston British Women's Tennis Association).

WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS

Table listing football results from the Wednesday night fixtures, including World Cup Qualifiers, Premier League, and various non-league matches.

